WIN! TV and Xbox 360! Worth £2000!

INCREDIBLES! They're back! First + best review!

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50 CENT REVIEWED! Better than GTA? You must see the score!

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GAMES MASTER

Jan 2006
GM168

EVERY BIG XMAS GAME BLOWN APART! 5429 TIPS INSIDE!

HOW GOOD IS 360?

XBOX 360™ vs PS3 vs Revolution!

- Which one is YOUR next console?
- PERFECT DARK – the first unofficial review!
- EVERY launch game reviewed!

TOP 50 GAMES OF 2005! How many have you played?

EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST! Tom Clancy's SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT Uncovered on PS2, 360, PSP, Xb + PC!

GOT A NEW CONSOLE? EVERY GAME YOU MUST PLAY ON IT REVEALED!

2006

See the hottest games of 2006 first on EVERY FORMAT!

PREVIEWS BLOWOUT!

DRIVER 4
TOMB RAIDER
GEARS OF WAR
SONIC NEXT GEN
METAL GEAR SOLID 4
ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS
RESIDENT EVIL 5 + MORE

79 GAMES REVIEWED!

- SMACKDOWN VS RAW ON PSP!
- 50 CENT
- INCREDIBLES
- TRUE CRIME
- FIFA 06 360
- ANIMAL CROSSING DS
- CALL OF DUTY: BIG RED ONE

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING MULTI-FORMAT MAGAZINE!

Future MEDIA WITH PASSION
GM168 JAN 2006
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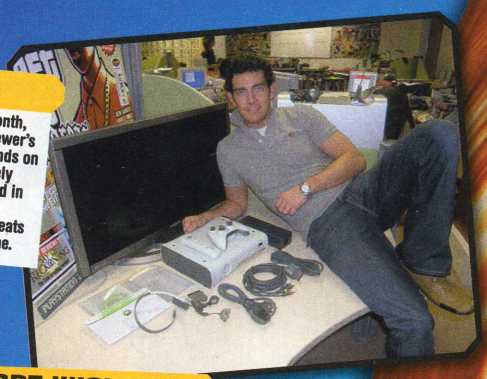
BEST BITS!

The stand out stuff this month on the UK's number one games mag!

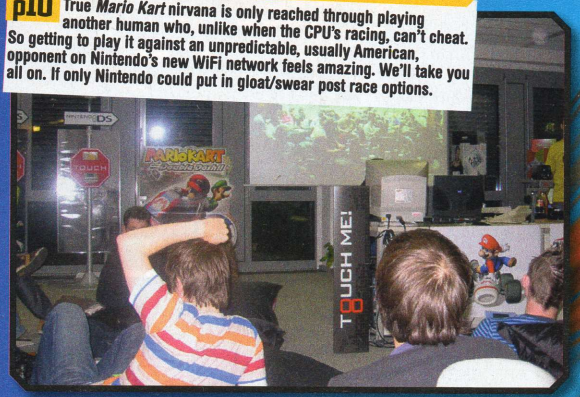
THE 360'S HERE!

p8 It was here in *GM* towers last month, too. But that was the debug reviewer's model. This issue, we got our hands on the proper retail machine; it was in a lovely shiny white box with all the leads wrapped in bright green plastic, and a free sticker came with the instruction book. Nothing beats opening a new console box for the first time.



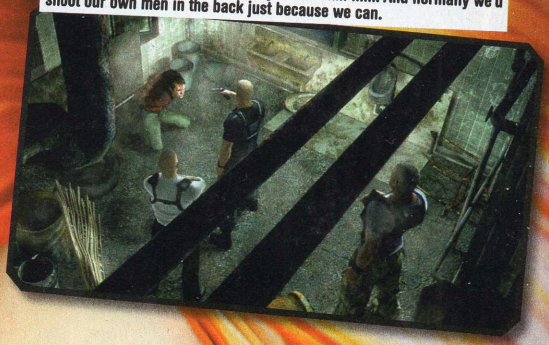
PLAYING MARIO KART WIFI

p10 True *Mario Kart* nirvana is only reached through playing another human who, unlike when the CPU's racing, can't cheat. So getting to play it against an unpredictable, usually American, opponent on Nintendo's new WiFi network feels amazing. We'll take you all on. If only Nintendo could put in gloat/swear post race options.

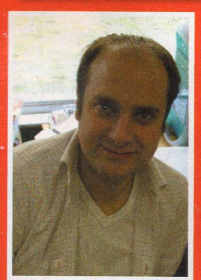


SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

p20 While playing the new *Splinter Cell* on 360, something strange happened. There's a sequence where you have to shoot a helicopter pilot. Only he now looks so real (apparently using more polygons in his face than a whole character in the last Xbox *Cell*) and pleads so convincingly, it's actually hard to kill him. And normally we'd shoot our own men in the back just because we can.



WELCOME TO GAMESMASTER



This month we're perched on the cusp of the new year. Like the Roman God Janus whose two faces allowed him to look to the past and forwards to the future at the same time. Only with games. In fact, no. Think of it more like we're sat on the trellis fence of the turn of the year with one buttock in 2005, as we bring you *the* list of the greatest games of 2005 (p.44) and reviews of the Xbox launch line up (starts p.90). Our other cheek is in the future – as we show you what you should get excited about in the new year (p.19). Once Xbox 360's joined by Sony's PS3 and Nintendo's Revolution, we're going to see games we wouldn't have believed possible even a couple of years ago. The best place to see it all and get an honest fellow gamer's opinion is right here in *GamesMaster*. As the UK's longest running and best selling videogames mag, we know what we're talking about. Have a great new year!

Robin
The Ed

FIRST AND BEST!

PERFECT DARK ZERO

The only review you can trust of the biggest game on Xbox 360!

SELECT YOUR MODE

GAMES MASTER

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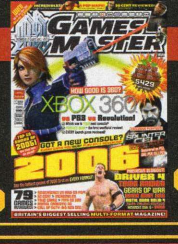
COVER STORIES

PERFECT DARK ZERO ..... PAGE 52
Read the full verdict on the 360's biggest game

2006 PREVIEW BLOW OUT ..... PAGE 19
Find out what you've got to play in 2006

SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT ..... PAGE 20
Find out why Sam Fisher is in the slammer

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF ..... PAGE 62
You'll find him da bumper review section



100% NEW!

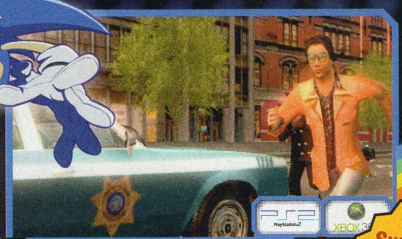
The Xbox 360 is finally here. Find out all you need to know about the 360 launch. 008

Find out why Mario is hanging around with that clown. It's not cos he's hungry. 011

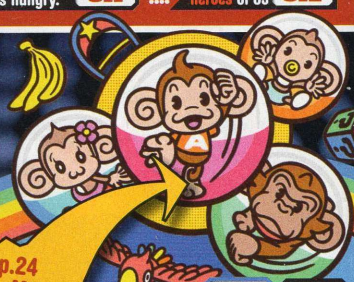
Vote for your heroes of 05 012

PREVIEWS

032 The 'hog gets boarding in *Sonic Rush*.



Tanner-less and hoping for a U-turn in fortunes, *Driver* is back! 030



p.24 Super Monkey Ball DS
See how Sega's spherical simian puzzler rolled onto Nintendo's handheld

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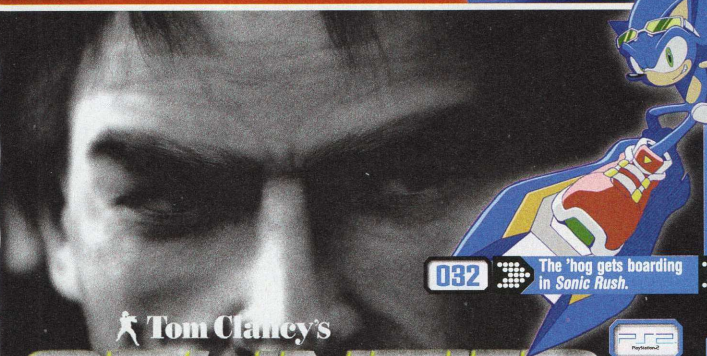
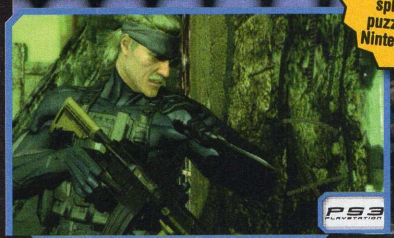


Tom Clancy's SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT
It's Fisher's new hell in a cell! 020



The oldest special op in town warms up for 2006 in *Metal Gear Solid 4*. 026

The latest on the epic locust exterminating blaster *Gears of Wars*. 028

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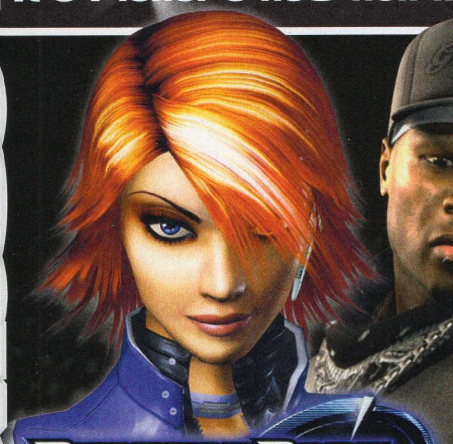
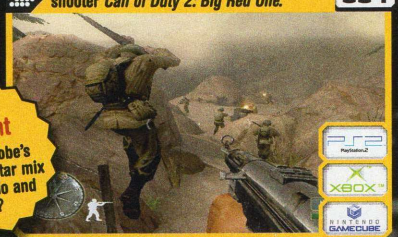


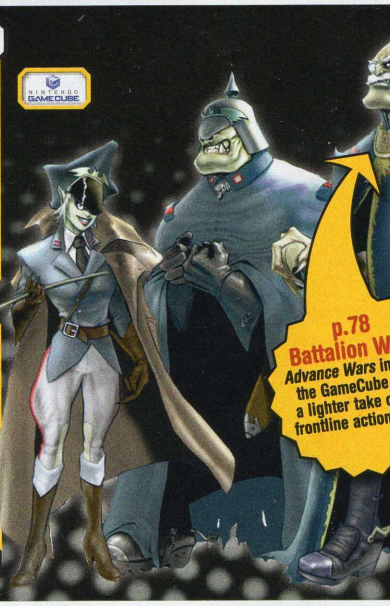
PERFECT DARK ZERO
Massive GM review! 052



Relive the US side of WW2 with new shooter *Call of Duty 2: Big Red One*. 094

p.62 50 Cent
Can the globe's biggest rap star mix it with Mario and Sonic?

Crime busting relocates to the Big Apple with *True Crime: New York City*. 074



p.78 Battalion Wars
Advance Wars invades the GameCube with a lighter take on the frontline action gam

WE ♥ GAMES

Your chance to rant and rave about all that's good and bad in the gaming world. 039

LATEST CODES EXPERT GUIDES TOP TIPS

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Find what you need in an instant!

t's the ultimate line-up of what rocked our world in the last welve months. Find out what hit the top spot! 044

p.86
Ridge Racer 6
Namco's long running arcade racer becomes part of the 360 launch. Find out if it can reach top gear on the 360

Nintendo's enchanting creature feature *Animal Crossing* goes handheld. 082

Craft your own 'incredible' designs in *Tony Hawk's American Sk8land.* 064

The family Parr are back in *The Incredible: Rise of the Underminer.* 070

Check out all the latest and greatest codes for all the new releases. 102

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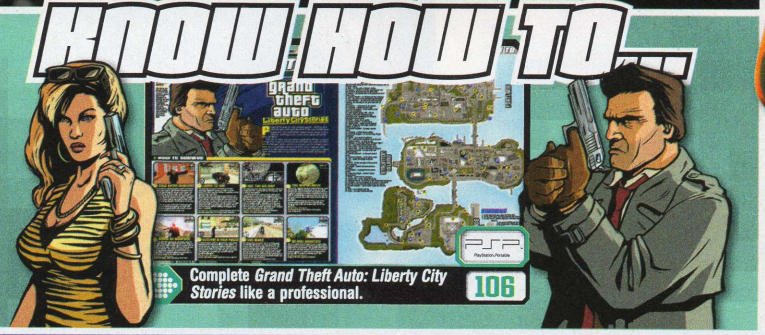

Complete *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories* like a professional. 106

HDTV AND XBOX 360!

A-Z OF GAMES

Here's nearly every game featured in this issue listed for your convenience...

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See if Mr. Incredible has reason to look so smug with our review of his latest game.

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TEAM GM

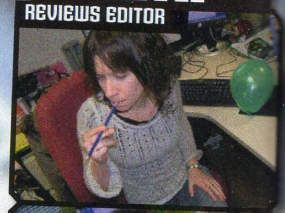
Looking to the future with one eye on the past...

MARK
REVIEWS

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Big Red One*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Spore*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Stop biting finger and toe nails

Mark's been playing *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones*, but he's still not convinced by the split personality bit. He used to like it, but now he's in two minds.

KATH
REVIEWS EDITOR



FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Animal Crossing DS*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Bully*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Spend less time doing my hair each day

For her New Year's resolution, Kath will be giving up smoking and she's in confident mood: "It will be no problem. I did it six or seven times last year!"

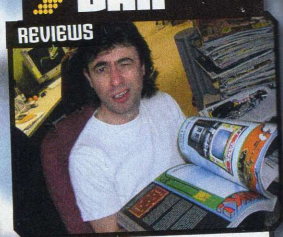
DAVE

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Call of Duty*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Develop a transferrable skill

REVIEWS

Where are you spending your New Year's, Dave?
"I always go to Scotland. Last year it was great as I was in charge of the beers."
Hogmanay?
"Well, I kept a few back for myself, but I wasn't tight or anything."

DAN
REVIEWS



FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Ridge Racer 6*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: Hopefully *Metal Gear 4*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Must do DIY better and faster

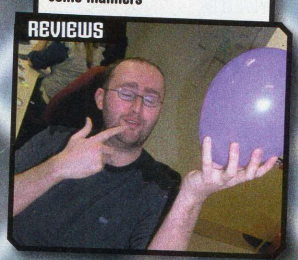
Dan's not the smartest of men. When he was having problems thinking of a Christmas present for his wife and someone suggested getting her a book he replied: "Nah, she's already got one of those."

STEVE

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Half-Life 2*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Elder Scrolls: Oblivion*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Teach my rats some manners

Steve is obsessed with his new High-Def television. When asked what his New Year Resolution was, he replied, "over 960 active scanning lines."

REVIEWS



TIM

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *The Incredibles*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *FIFA 2007*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: To reply to emails more promptly

REVIEWS

Tim has been really worried about his health in the winter months. He's particularly worried about catching Bird Flu as he's heard it's untweetable.

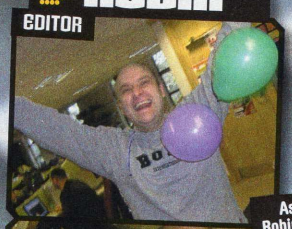
KIERON

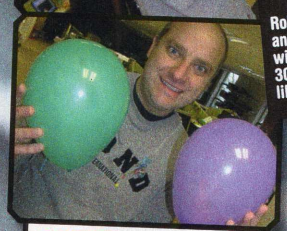
FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *City of Villains*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Shadow of the Colossus.*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Find time to play *Shadow of the Colossus*

REVIEWS

Having a good holiday season Kieron?
"Well, New Year's is alright but I don't really like Christmas Day as it's just like being in work – you put all the effort in, but it's the fat guy in the suit that gets all the credit."

ROBIN
EDITOR



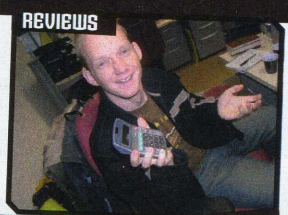


As a New Year's resolution Robin is giving up smoking and bacon sandwiches, which will be tough as he has a 30-a-day habit... and smokes like a chimney, too.

ALEX

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Perfect Dark*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Zelda*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Work harder so I can get a High-Def TV

REVIEWS



Due to the shortages of the Xbox console, Alex couldn't buy a 360, so he got himself three 99s instead. Unfortunately, though, it just didn't add up.

JOEL

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Perfect Dark*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Resident Evil 5??*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Write more successful children's books

What's your New Year's resolution then Joel?
"Well, for 2006 I intend to be a model worker and model citizen."
What, you mean setting an exemplary standard, worthy of imitation?
"No, I mean a miniature replica of the real thing."

REVIEWS

ROB

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Perfect Dark*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Zelda* on Revolution
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Give up New Year's resolutions

FAVOURITE GAME THIS ISSUE: *Driver Parallel Lines*
WHAT WILL BE THE GAME OF 2006: *Elder Scrolls Oblivion*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Read more books

STAFF WRITER

As it's party season, Rob been going around in fancy dress – he's been dressing up as a pair of jump leads. Trouble is, he's been having problems getting into pubs as bouncers fear he might start something.

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100% NEW!

Console war is declared in the UK with the launch of Xbox 360. Here's everything you need to know!

SONY'S DS SUCCESS

The PSP may be the handheld that you can't get hold of for love nor money in the run up to Christmas, but it seems that the DS has been a stealthy success. While Sony's PSP has suffered with poor software sales, DS games are selling like Crazy Frogs this Christmas. Over one million copies of puppy-sim *Nintendogs* have already been sold in Europe and *Mario DS* is looking likely to do just as well over the Crimbo period.

XBOX 3

360 hits the UK! Get all the facts right now!

Xbox 360 is live! By the time this copy of *GM* hits your doormat you'll more than likely be drooling over the lovely Joanna Dark, tearing around Tokyo in *Project Gotham 3* and wellying the Wehrmacht in *Call of Duty 2*.

As we go to press it's impossible to judge how the UK launch will turn out, but if it's anything like the US one – where over 4,500 retailers across the country held the intriguingly named 'midnight madness' events – it's going to be Microsoft mental after 2nd December. We're expecting big shortages of the machine on shop shelves with only a rumoured 300,000 consoles for the whole of Europe. Although Microsoft are promising regular restocking right up to Christmas...

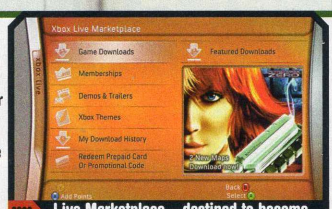
WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

GM's exclusive blow-by-blow account of the opening of one of the first 360s in the UK!

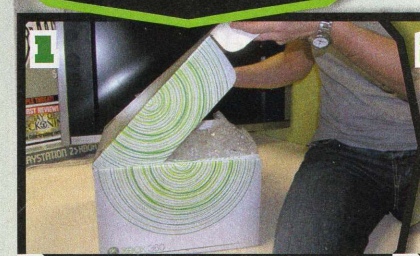
MICROSOFT'S' MARKET GARDEN

As well as being an online hub where you'll challenge gamers from across the globe, Microsoft's Live service has expanded to include a Marketplace.

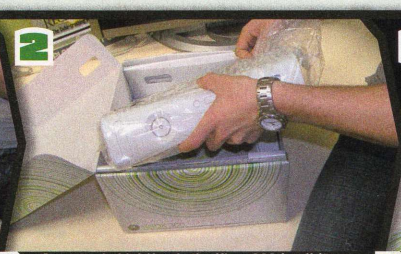
This innovative new download service requires users to purchase Microsoft Points, which can then be spent on downloads of images, soundtracks and Xbox 360 themes from games like *Gun*, *Quake 4* and *Amped 3*. Playable demos and game trailers will be free of charge, offering Live gamers a chance to test out the latest titles for their next-gen machine without spending a penny. With *Ridge Racer 6* you'll even be able to download a pack of new cars for use in the game. Xbox Live's Arcade service will also use Microsoft Points, with most of the games coming in at the 400 point mark – roughly £3.50 in 'real' money. Marketplace can be used by both fee-paying Gold Live customers and gamers on the free Silver Live service.



Live Marketplace – destined to become the gaming community's Albert Square?



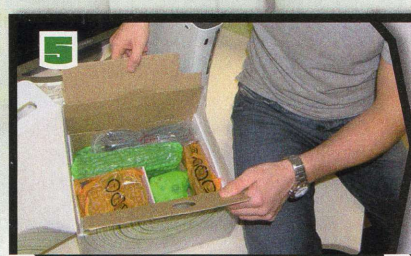
1 Rob tears into his new toy like a six-year-old on Christmas moring – except he's not in pyjamas.



2 Come to daddy! Here's the Xbox 360 in all its glory. It's more PC-like than we'd imagined.

3 It's a bit on the large side, but nowhere near the great lump the original Xbox was.

4 Bah, boring instructions. Nothing of any interest to us game-tarts here.



5 So many little polythene bags, so little time. What shall we open first? Hmm...

6 Ohh, look! You can actually turn you 360 on/off with the cool wireless pad.

7 Whoa! 360's black brick of a PSU is surely the largest of all time – it's heavy, too.

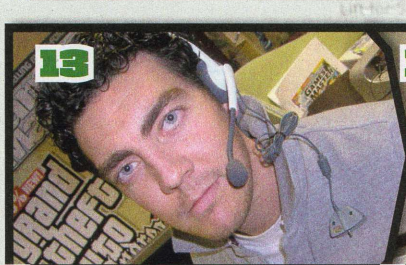
8 Nice of Microsoft to bundle some batteries. And they're Energiser as well...

9 2 AA batteries last 30 hours. The controller works at a range of 30ft – all good so far.

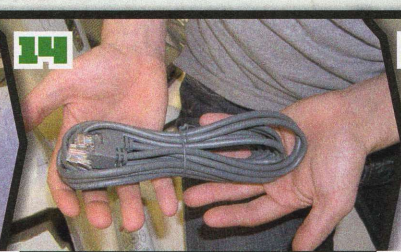
10 The remote is proof that 360 is the ultimate home entertainment centre. It's gorgeous.

11 More bundled batteries, this time for the remote. Still admiring its majestic beauty here.

12 What's this? A Madonna-style headset? Is it possible to wear this without looking like a nerd?

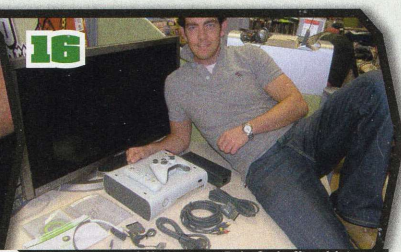


13 Poor Rob looks more 'call centre' than 'Buzz Lightyear'. He loves it, though. Bless.

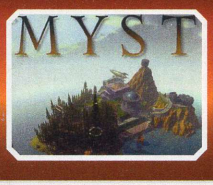


14 This Ethernet cable comes as standard. It'll allow you to get online, so it's pretty essential.

15 Last but not least come the HD cable and composite/SCART adapter. All very grey.



16 Hey there sexy! No, not you Rob. Sod off and let us have a go on the shiny new 360...



MYST FOR PSP

Sega's 'you either love it or hate it' classic puzzle-based adventure *Myst* will be released on the PSP in Japan next year. As yet it's not known if the game will be a direct conversion of the PC original or a brand new game, or even if it will get a western release, but it's enough to get *Myst* fans very excited. We'll keep you posted on further announcements.

SPLITTER'S NEW GAME!

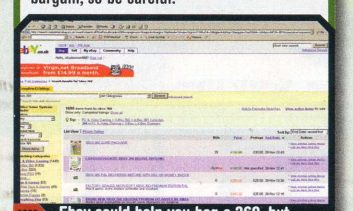
Free Radical Design, the studio that brought us *TimeSplitters* and *Second Sight*, has partnered up with Ubisoft for their next game, planned for the PC and next-gen consoles. Details are scarce, but the game will apparently be aimed at older gamers (so a blood bath then) and will feature difficult strategic and moral dilemmas. Due out sometime between summer 2006 and spring 2007, we'll bring you more details as soon we get them.

360 ROLLS OUT

Mutant Storm on Xbox Live arcade is the most frenetic blaster since *Grid Runner*.

GETTING A 360

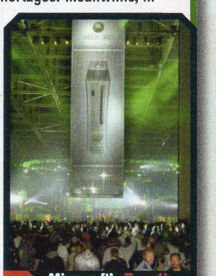
If you're finding that collecting gold dust is easier than tracking down a 360, you're not alone. We rang GAME and they seemed totally unsure of how much stock was available, reckoning they'd only fulfil pre-orders. Cancellations and no-shows do occur, though, so it might be worth popping in every so often to check out the situation. Ebay is another alternative, but with prices starting at around £350 and spiralling all the way up to £600, sourcing a 360 won't be cheap and there are *a lot* of unscrupulous individuals looking to cash in on punters' desperation to grab a Christmas bargain, so be careful.



Ebay could help you bag a 360, but make sure to look before you leap...

VIOLENT GAMES

Wannabe US 360 owners have proven themselves to be a violent lot. A brawl involving 300 people queuing outside a Maryland supermarket on launch day had to be broken up by police when fights broke out over shortages. Meanwhile, in Virginia, an Electronics Boutique shop was held up at gunpoint by a robber who made off with two 360 consoles. Seems crime does *play* after all (sorry).



Microsoft's Zero Hour launch event.

BACKWARDS COMPATIBILITY

Over 200 Xbox titles are currently compatible with 360. *GM* breathed a sigh of collective relief when we discovered the likes of *KOTOR*, *Halo 2*, *Half Life 2*, *PES5* and, last but *definitely* not least, *Barbie Horse Adventure* would all work on the next-gen hardware. Point your browsers towards www.xbox.com/en-US/games/backwardcompatibilityqa.htm for the full list.
A quick warning though – backwards compatibility only works via software emulation. It's yet another good reason to opt for the £280 premium package which includes a hard drive and necessary emulation tools.

All Xbox games automatically upscale to HD resolutions on 360. Amazing.

CONSOLE WAR!

RUMOUR CONTROL

As we settle down to a New Year 360 meltdown, how are the other contenders in the next-gen console war faring?

It's not all quiet on the other next-gen front...

REVOLUTION

- "Do I expect Nintendo to be at a lower price point than our competition? Yes I do" claims confident Nintendo of America marketing bod Reggie Fils-Aime.

GM verdict: Fingers Crossed.

- Ninty has revealed every Revolution will have a 'play control system' that'll allow parents to decide what type of games their kids can play.

GM Verdict: Gory games coming to Revolution?

- Nintendo Jim Merrick reckons Europe could be first in line for Revolution – "There are no rules that it must be Japan or the US first" he said.

GM Verdict: Bring it on!

- Ubisoft *'Splinter Cell'* Montreal is currently working on a *'Doom* like' first-person shoot 'em up for Revolution.

GM Verdict: Stealthy scares? Sounds ace.

- And finally, *Sims* creator Will Wright is all excited about Revolution. "It looks pretty cool – I like the idea of taking the games outside the box and into that close-body kind of space" he gushed.

PS3

- Sony could be showcasing the PS3 next month at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas.

GM Verdict: More than likely.

- Sony expects to launch PS3 in Japan next March, with a US launch following in the autumn.

GM Verdict: They'll be lucky.

- PS3's price point is now rumoured to be between $300-$400 (£170-£230).

GM Verdict: Cheaper than expected... if true.

- Howard Stringer, Sony's CEO, has claimed "PS3 will be bundled with a selection of preloaded films, TV programmes and games".

GM Verdict: PS3 a pirate's paradise?

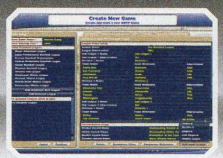
- Stringer went on to suggest that PS3 is aiming for total integration with other Sony products like digital cameras, mp3 players and televisions.

GM Verdict: Canny Sony.

- Sony's Michael Ephraim believes there is a "good likelihood" PS3, like PSP before it, could be region-free machine.

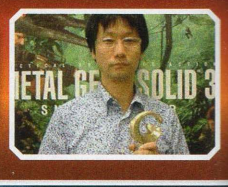
GM Verdict: Import game heaven.

100% NEW!



BASEBALL MANAGER 2006

Football management geniuses Sports Interactive have turned their management brains to baseball. *Out of the Park Baseball Manager 2006* will be a download only title, priced at around £20. Available to pre-order now at www.outoftheparkbaseballmanager.com, the game will be released in spring 2006.



MOBILE MARIO!

Nintendo finally goes wireless...

After years of denying any interest in the online space, Ninty has finally got up to speed with the times – and how!

By the time you read this, Nintendo will have launched their DS WiFi service in the UK, meaning you can play *Mario Kart*, *Tony Hawks American Wasteland* right now and *Animal Crossing: Wild World* and *Metroid Prime Hunters* in 2006 against other Ninty fans all over the world.

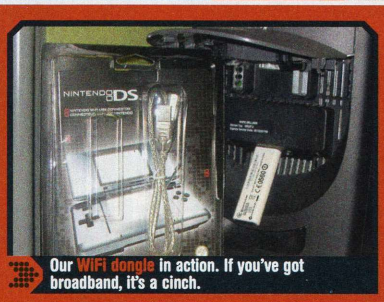
Despite a few teething problems (some US WiFi hotspots have experienced bouts of slowdown), nearly 50% of US *Super Mario Kart* DS owners have taken the racer online. That's a pretty impressive figure.

To ensure that the service will be completely safe, Nintendo promise you'll only be able to play against designated pals and family members. Players will have no other means of direct contact, meaning flame wars or other dodgy online goings-on simply won't be possible.

Nintendo's obvious commitment to good, clean online fun bodes well for a future free of hax00rs and pwnage. From what we've seen and played so far, DS WiFi is going to be absolutely massive...

THE HOT SPOT!

Nintendo's commitment to online gaming has seen the company plough untold amounts of cash into 7,500 wireless hotspots across the UK. Simply head over to traditional gamer hangouts like McDonalds, Welcome Break, Coffee Republic, selected games shops and loads of other public places and your DS'll do the rest. There's a full list on www.nintendowifi.com.



Our WiFi dongle in action. If you've got broadband, it's a cinch.

GETTING ONLINE

Luckily, anyone with an existing wireless network can also get online with their DS without having to buy a Big Mac or a cappuccino. Those with wired broadband can access the service via an official Nintendo USB adapter, which will set you back £30.

If you're having any problems, surf over to www.nintendowifi.com. It'll tell you exactly how to get everything up and running, as well as hosting online leaderboards, a hotspot search and community forums.

Log on to www.nintendowifi.com for a one stop shop for all your DS WiFi needs.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

We recently got the chance to jet over to Nintendo Europe's Frankfurt HQ and sample some competitive WiFi *Mario Kart* action against Ninty America and Canada. We found it to be a lag-free blast, although we simply couldn't finish ahead of producer Hideki Konno however hard, even after three hours of trying! We weren't that surprised, really...

GM gets caned by Konno at *Mario Kart* in Frankfurt.

BREAKING NEWS — NINTENDO TO FULLY UNVEIL REVOLUTION AT E3 IN MAY!

BULLETPROOF JUNK

Fiddy talks censorship

Outspoken hip-hop legend 50 Cent is encouraging parents to pick up a copy of his 18-rated new game *Bulletproof* for their kiddies, however young they may be.

Mr 'In Da Club"s odyssey of swearing and bloodletting didn't go down to well at GM Towers this month, cursing and knifing its way to a paltry 45%.

Unsurprisingly rated 'Mature' in the US (17+) and 18 in the UK for lashings of graphic violence, bad language and dodgy sexual themes, it's probably fair to say it's not a suitable game for younger gamers.

Undeterred, Fiddy – who has a 9 year-old son himself – revealed his belief that folks should sit down and play Bulletproof alongside their children, talking them through the explicit goings-on as they did so. "I think everyone knows that a game is a game", he explained. Nothing at all to do with wanting to boost sales then, eh Fiddy?

50 wants dads to tell their kids about how great *Bulletproof* is.

Neighbourhood watch, G Unit style. What a caring bunch...

MASTER THIEF

Halo script leaked?

Now it could all be a load of gossip, but *GM* has it on good authority that a legitimate draft of Halo – the movie has been leaked onto the net.

Alex *'28 Days Later'* Garland's 'script' has met with a glowing reception among the fanboys, with one reviewer commenting: "This script rocks. It's the *Saving Private Ryan* of videogame movies."

All the stalwarts from the *Halo* universe – like Cortana, Captain Keyes, the flood, etc. appear, alongside other less obvious "twists and turns".

KOJIMA GODS FOR PSP

Metal Gear-meister Hideo Kojima is reportedly working on a top secret project for the PSP. Still in the planning stage, Kojima is hoping to create a totally unique control system for the game – so different that Kojima himself is unsure it will work. If they get a positive response to a prototype, they'll go ahead and make the game. And here was us thinking it was only the DS that was going to have games with unusual control systems.

DOA HITS THE BIG SCREEN

Dimension Films has signed up to distribute the rumoured *Dead or Alive* film adaptation, meaning the film will be getting a release sometime at the end of 2006. Featuring Holly Valance, *Sin City's* Devon Aoki and *Elektra* actress Natassia Malthe the trailer is looking like a sort of *Charlie's Angels* with the girls scrapping in various states of undress.

CENA LAYS THE SMACK DOWN

WWE champion grapples with PS2 - and wins!

WWE champ John Cena's hands are three times the size of an average joypad.

Top WWE star John Cena isn't just the Doctor of Thuganomics – the wrestling champ has also shown that he's is the Doctor of, erm, Padanomics by winning the first ever THQ European Superstar Challenge.

The knockout tournament pitted a slew of grappling giants against one another in bouts of PS2 *SmackDown! vs Raw 2006* (check out the review of the PSP version on p.85), prior to the WWE's show in Manchester on 17th November.

Cena is well known within wrestling circles for his love of games, and was the heavy favourite going into the competition. He beat WWE newcomer Chris Masters in the finals with his trademark finisher, the FU.

THQ European Superstar Challenge

Held at Paparazzi, Manchester

QUARTER-FINALS:

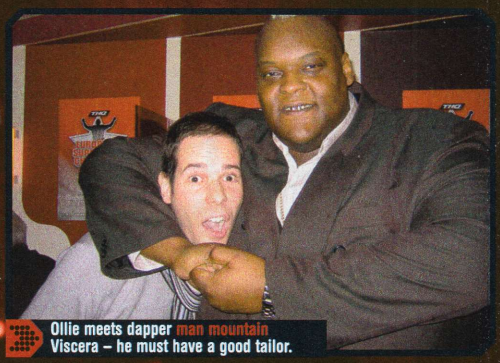
- John Cena beat Candice
- Viscera beat Eric Bischoff
- Victoria beat Ashley
- Chris Masters beat Carlito

SEMI-FINALS:

- John Cena beat Viscera
- Chris Masters beat Victoria

FINAL:

- John Cena beat Chris Masters



Ollie meets dapper man mountain Viscera – he must have a good tailor.

MEET VISCERA

***GM's* fearless grappling correspondent Oliver Hurley confronted the extremely well-fed Viscera...**

How do you feel about your performance in the THQ European Superstar Challenge? I've never played the game before, so I did real well. I think I could beat John Cena.

What do you like about your character in the game? They got the size correct! I'm dwarfing everyone.

Midway are currently working on a new TNA wrestling game. What do you think of TNA's more acrobatic style? I'd rather be a big giant and just let the other guy bounce off me. God bless those TNA guys: what they do is a lot more dangerous and my hat's off to them.

Tell us about your recent storyline with ring announcer Lillian Garcia. She asked me to marry her at Vengeance in June, but I said no. Now I'm looking for a new love interest. I'd like to go back to Trish Stratus!

What are you memories of Eddie Guerrero? He was one of the best wrestlers I've ever seen and he'll truly be missed. Wrestling is a very rough life. It's not for everybody.

NEW STUFF

PLAYGEAR POCKET PSP PROTECTIVE CASE

Is your pristine PSP being knocked about in your rucksack on the way to school or work in the mornings? Yep, ours too. Annoying isn't it? Thanks goodness for Logitech's new set of PSP armour – a virtually indestructible polycarbonate shell. It even doubles as a handy sun visor, protecting your gaming prowess from the potentially harmful glare of solar rays.

FROM: Logitech
CONTACT: www.logitech.co.uk
PRICE: £14.99

CORDLESS G7 GAMING-GRADE MOUSE

In *GM*165 we raved about Logitech MX518 gaming mouse – with a 1600dpi resolution and super-sleek looks made rival rodents shriek with fear. Determined not to rest on their laurels, Logitech has gone one better – the G7's wireless performance is terrific and with 2000dpi resolution you'll never miss a frag again. Microsoft and Razer might as well just pack up and go home...

FROM: Logitech
CONTACT: www.logitech.co.uk
PRICE: £79.90

G15 GAMING-GRADE KEYBOARD

The plasticky Battlestar Galactica styling might not be to everybody's tastes, but this is one solid keyboard designed specifically for you lot – the hardcore gamers. It's got a built-in LCD screen which allows you to view game stats like ammo and health, has a fancy blue backlit keypad so you can play in the dark and features 18 programmable 'G Keys' which saves you having to play keyboard twister to pull off combos. Typing may never be the same again...

FROM: Logitech
CONTACT: www.logitech.co.uk
PRICE: £49.99

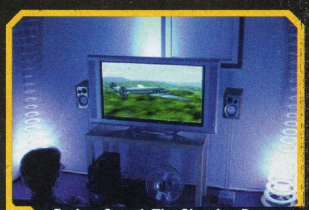
UNIVERSAL CHALLENGE RACING WHEEL

Definitely one for the younger Schumachers, this decent little wheel and pedals set is refreshingly light on the wallet. If you fancy taking that *Gran Turismo* or *Need for Speed* experience to a higher level, this is a cracking place to start. Don't expect the world, though – it's spongy and the vibration is a bit pathetic, but it's a lot of fun and even has a classy Ferrari logo slashed on it. Forza!

FROM: Thrustmaster
CONTACT: www.thrustmaster.com
PRICE: £24.99

LIGHT FANTASTIC!

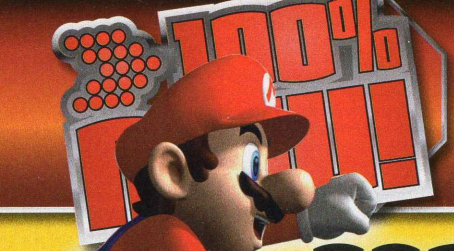
Philips introduces amBX to the world...



Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon as seen through amBX. Nice!

Set to launch in May, electronics giant Philips is aiming to reinvent the way we watch and game with amBX. Light, colour, sound, vibration, heat and airflow are used to immerse the player into their experience like never before.

Imagine it... stalking through the jungle in *Metal Gear* will turn your room jungle green. When you feel the noxious breath of the hydra in *God of War* you'll be blasted by fans, lightning storms in *Splinter Cell* will make strobe effects and being blown out of the sky in *Battlefront* will result in a blast from your heaters... Wow.

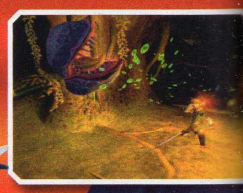


SO METAL

Hideo Kojima has hinted that *Metal Gear Solid* is set to appear on PSP. And yes, it's going to be a proper stealthy *MGS* title. Shinta Nojiri and Noriaki Okamura are rumoured to be conspiring on the project, too.

MORE ZELDA

Twilight Princess may be delayed, but news continues to pour in suggesting it'll be well worth the wait. *Zelda* director Eiji Aonuma, expects *Twilight* to be the most epic *Zelda* yet. It seems a figure of 100+ hours doesn't appear to be inconceivable.



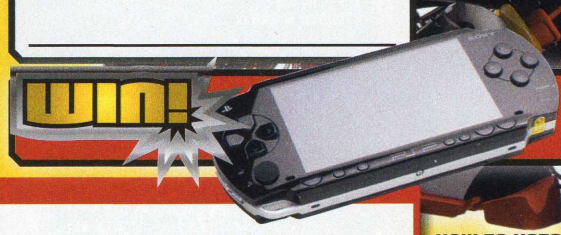
GAMESMASTER READER AWARDS 2005

Golden Joysticks? Pah! Our reader awards are where it's at

Us hardened hacks at *GM* Towers thought we'd seen it all in 2004. After all, what could possibly top the likes of *Half Life 2*, *Resi 4* and *GTA: San Andreas?* Then 2005 happened, and blew us all away.

From the new handhelds, to the next-gen consoles and, of course, the games, it's been a hell of a year. But who *really* deserves the plaudits? It's your shout. So get your votes in now and be in with a chance to win a PSP.

- GAME OF THE YEAR 2005
- BEST PS2 GAME OF 2005
- BEST XBOX GAME OF 2005
- BEST CUBE GAME OF 2005
- BEST PC GAME OF 2005
- BEST DS GAME OF 2005
- BEST PSP GAME OF 2005
- BEST GBA GAME OF 2005
- BEST PIECE OF HARDWARE 2005
- BEST TERM OF ABUSE IN A MULTI-PLAYER
- BEST CHEAT/SECRET OF 2005
- BEST GRAPHICS OF 2005
- BEST MOVE OF 2005
- HERO OF THE YEAR 2005
- VILLAIN OF THE YEAR 2005
- BIGGEST 'WOW' MOMENT OF 2005
- DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR
- SOLID SNAKE AWARD FOR BAD HAIR
- BEST ONLINE GAME OF 2005
- SEXIEST GAME BABE/BLOKE OF 2005
- MOST WANTED GAME OF 2006



Vote now – all entries will be entered into our compo to win a PSP!

- YOUR DETAILS

NAME .....

AGE .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

PHONE NUMBER ..... EMAIL .....

HOW TO VOTE:

1. 1. Jot down your choices (or photocopy/rewrite it if you don't want to harm your copy of GM) and lob it in the post to GM Awards 2005, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
2. Head your choices '*GM* Awards 2005' and email to gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk

Closing date is 31/01/06. We thank you.

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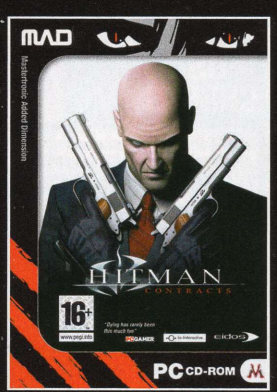
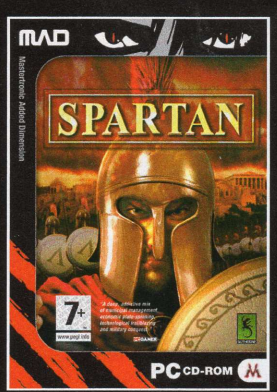
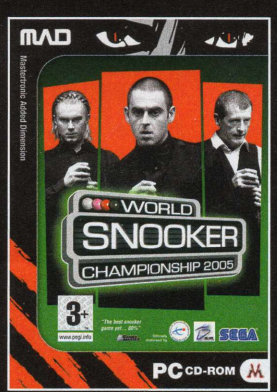
£9.99

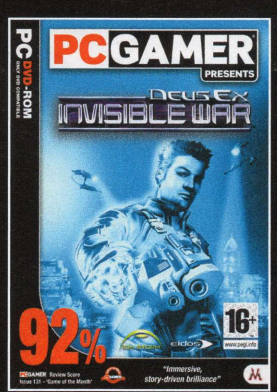
REAL VALUE

GREAT GAMES









MAD

PC GAMER PRESENTS

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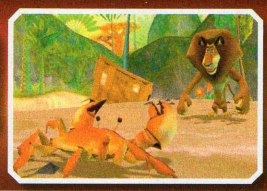
100% NEW!

SF Fights

Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max will soon be kicking its way onto Sony's handheld. *SF PSP* sports the requisite WiFi functionality, as well as four new opponents to the original roster of 30 including Yun, Maki and Eagle from *Capcom vs. SNK 2*. Expect this in early 2006.



Dream Works

Kings of the movie to game tie-in Activision has announced they've extended their lucrative deal with Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks. Expect to see conversions of flicks including *Madagascar 2* and *Shrek 3* appearing on a console near you soonish.

UK Top 20 Games Chart

SmackDown! wins the battle of the new entries this month, leaving Neo, Harry Potter and Tony Hawks on the ropes

GM uses the ChartTrack chart – the only chart officially recognised by the UK software industry. Get the full 20 in *GM* every month!

ChartTrack

IT'S THE ONLY CHART THAT COUNTS!

NO.		PREVIOUS POSITIONS: Last week	2 weeks ago	3 weeks ago	GAME	PUBLISHER	GM'S SCORE	GM JUDGEMENTS
1	NEW	-	-	-	WWE SmackDown! Vs. Raw 2006 PS2	THQ	82%	Almost exactly like real wrestling – whether that's a good or a bad thing is up to you.
2	▼	1	6	-	Star Wars: Battlefront 2 PS2 XBOX PC PSP	LucasArts	81%	Another satisfying stomp (and soar) around the stars, but best for modem owners.
3	▲	4	2	3	FIFA 06 PS2 XBOX PC PSP	EA	69%	Predictable, dull and more laboured than Thomas Brolin's breathing. We've finally lost patience.
4	▼	2	-	-	GTA: Liberty City Stories PSP GOLD AWARD	Take 2	90%	The best game on PSP, but WiFi aside it could only ever be a shuffle sideways for the series.
5	▼	3	1	1	Pro Evolution Soccer 5 PS2 XBOX PC GOLD AWARD	Konami	96%	Takes the beautiful game to a whole new level of evolution. Just champion.
6	NEW	-	-	-	HP & the Goblet of Fire PS2 XBOX PC DS	EA	69%	Dazzles like expensive fireworks, but the wizardly wonders splutter out all too quickly.
7	▲	10	-	-	The Sims 2 PS2 XBOX PC DS	EA	72%	Not the step up on the consoles as it was on the PC – overall, a bit disappointing.
8	▼	7	-	-	Resident Evil 4 PS2 GOLD AWARD	Capcom	96%	Slightly less polished than the Cube version, but still one of the best games you'll play.
9	NEW	-	-	-	The Matrix: Path of Neo PS2 XBOX PC	Atari	85%	The definitive *Matrix* game. Swallow that red pill and disappear down this rabbit hole ASAP.
10	▼	5	4	4	The Warriors PS2 XBOX	Take 2	84%	Done with love, as a movie licence should be. Shame you've probably never heard of it...
11	NEW	-	-	-	Tony Hawk's American Wasteland PS2 XBOX CUBE	Activision	80%	It's hardly evolved, but still feels good. If you're sick of Tony though, this isn't the cure.
12	▼	-	-	-	Ultimate Spider-Man PS2 XBOX CUBE	Ubisoft	80%	Still slick and fun, but is only recommended for those who've not played *Spider-Man 2*.
13	▲	16	7	8	Age of Empires 3 PC	Microsoft	81%	Innovative and beautiful, but too focused on the dull multi-player.
14	▼	12	-	-	Gun PS2 XBOX PC	Activision	77%	An exhilarating ride that trots between brilliant gun battles and a dated format.
15	▼	8	3	2	Football Manager 06 PC GOLD AWARD	Sega	91%	*Football Manager 2006* is the best footie sim by a mile. This is one management game you shouldn't miss.
16	▲	17	22	-	Buzz! The Music Quiz PS2	Sony	80%	A real buzz and no mistake, *SingStar* finally has a rival for our affection in the party stakes.
17	▼	13	5	5	Pokémon Emerald GBA	Nintendo	86%	A fantastic adventure improved. But nothing much to entice *Ruby/Sapphire* fans back.
18	▼	9	-	-	Call of Duty 2 PC GOLD AWARD	Activision	92%	Bayoneting its rivals into gory submission, *Call of Duty 2* is a game you really need to play.
19	▲	28	-	-	Crash Tag Team Racing PS2 XBOX CUBE	Vivendi	57%	Dire platforming and tediously dull racing – together at last! Car crash gaming.
20	▼	11	-	-	Civilization IV PC	Take 2	88%	Not quite hardy enough to topple *Rome*, but this *Civilisation* will last for a long time to come.

Software charts compiled by ChartTrack, ©2005 ELSPA (UK) Ltd. www.elspa.com Words: Rob Taylor

01 WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw

Grunting, sweating musclemen clad in skin-tight Lycra locked in a deathly embrace with one another. Erm, maybe that's quite enough wrestler-love for one issue. But it's no real surprise to see *WWE* sitting sweatily at the top of the Christmas charts, and rightly so because it's a cracking grapple 'em up. And we're not just saying that because John Cena has Robin in a headlock.

03 Star Wars: Battlefront 2

Almost, *almost* forcing its way to the top of the Christmas pile, LucasArts' sublime online shooter died a Darth right at the last minute. Never mind the lacklustre single-player and shoddy space combat – jump online or grab some Jedi buddies and *Battlefield* rocks harder than an evening at Jabba the Hutt's pleasure barge. And we're not talking about that Rancor pit...

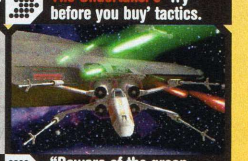
12 The Matrix: Path of Neo:

The One's brief reign as coolest dude ever to wear a leather trenchcoat may have come and gone, but that doesn't mean *Path of Neo* isn't still videogaming's equivalent of necking 10 cans of Red Bull. It may have its fair share of glitches, but it's fast, furious, brutal and – most importantly – a heck of a lot of fun. *Reloaded* and *Revolutions* sucked, but this is mesmerising.

Batista's loss was an open and shut case.

The Undertaker's 'Try before you buy' tactics.

Vader's man management is harsh but fair.



"Beware of the green beans? Oh beams. Argh!"

Neo and co. are proud members of the NRA.

"You cow! I'll have to re-plaster that now!"

Japan Charts

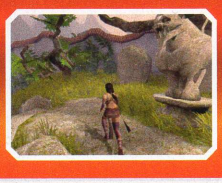
Pokémon Torouze have everything to lose with this low entry.

1	Daito Giken Pachislot Simulator Osu! Bancho PS2
2	Daredemo Asobi Taizen DS
3	Beat Down PS2
4	Wanda & the Colossus PS2
5	Kahashima Ryuuta Kyouju no Nouo Kitaeru Otona DS
6	Training DS
7	Tamagotchi no Puchi Puchi Omisetchi DS
8	Yawaraka Atamajuku DS
9	Nouryoku Trainer Portable PSP
10	Pokémon Torouze DS

US Charts

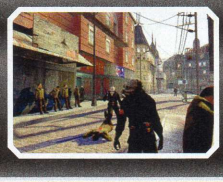
World of Warcraft makes a surprise re-entry to the top spot.

1	World of Warcraft PC
2	Civilisation 4 PC
3	Star Wars: Battlefront 2 PC
4	Mario Kart DS
5	Mario Party 7 CUBE
6	Nintendogs – Labrador Retriever DS
7	Age of Empires 3 PC
8	Madden 2006 PS2
9	GTA: Liberty City Stories PSP
10	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire PS2



EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

BioWare CEO Ray Muzyka has confirmed that a sequel to its chop-socky RPG *Jade Empire* is currently in the works. While the original was an Xbox exclusive, it's likely that *Jade Empire 2* will be appearing on Xbox 360. This rumour appears to have been confirmed by Muzyka himself, who declared that BioWare is "working on not just one, but two Xbox 360 titles". So what is the other title? *Mass Effect* is our best bet.



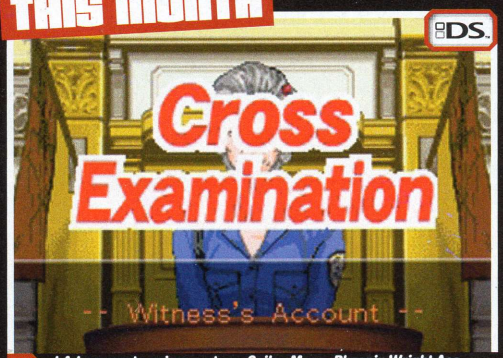
HALF-LIFE 2 HOLD-UP

Aftermath, the eagerly awaited expansion pack to classic FPS *Half-Life 2* was originally due for release this Christmas. Sadly, Valve's Doug Lombardi has confirmed that it now looks set to be delayed until some time after Christmas. Set once again in City 17, this new chapter in the story picks up the plot immediately after the destruction of the Combine HQ. Now you'll have to wait until February or even March to find out humanity's fate.

WATCH OUT FOR...

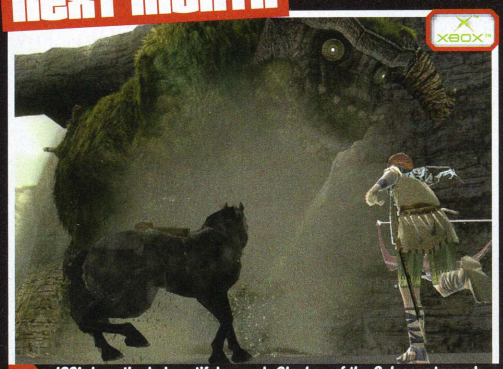
Look out for these latest games to hit the shelves...

THIS MONTH



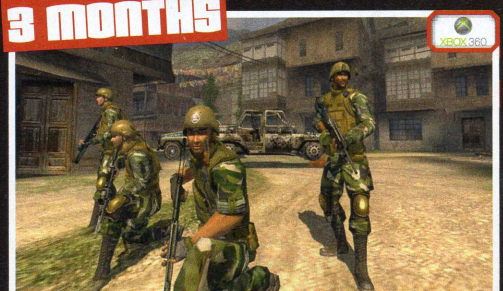
LA Law meets anime cartoon *Sailor Moon*, *Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney* is the kind of experience you'll only find on DS...

NEXT MONTH



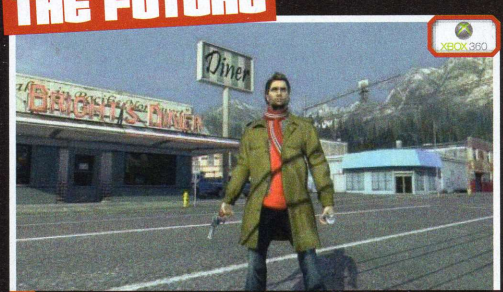
ICO's hauntingly beautiful sequel, *Shadow of the Colossus* tugged on GamesMaster's collective heartstrings last month.

3 MONTHS



A masterclass in strategic shooters, *Full Spectrum Warrior 2: Ten Hammers* is looking like it'll nail the realism of war.

THE FUTURE



Alan Wake may sound like a sissy next to *Max Payne*, but Remedy's version of *Twin Peaks* is shaping up real nice.

Cut it out and stick it on the wall

DECEMBER

18TH	Battlefield 2: PS2 XBOX PC CUBE GBA DS PSP	EA
16TH	Street Racing Syndicate GBA	Zoo Digital
23RD	The Sims 2 PSP	EA
23RD	Battlefield Command PC	Codemasters
23RD	Armoured Core Formula Front PSP	Agetec
23RD	Batman Begins PSP	EA

JANUARY

6TH	Mortal Kombat Deception PSP	Midway
13TH	Ridge Racer 6 360	Namco
13TH	Final Fight: Streetwise PS2 XBOX	Capcom
24TH	Test Drive Unlimited 360	Atari
24TH	SPECNAZ: Project Wolf PC	GMX
27TH	Rise of Nations - Rise of Legends PC	Microsoft
27TH	The Godfather PS2 XBOX PC	EA
27TH	Samurai Showdown 5 PS2	Ignition
27TH	Football Generation PS2	Midas
27TH	Great Invasions PC	Digital Jesters
27TH	SOCOM 3 PS2	Sony
27TH	Rainbow Six 4 - Lockdown PC	Ubisoft
27TH	Arcade Classics Vol 1 - Play It PSP	TBC
27TH	Armoured Core: Nexus PS2	TBC
27TH	Echo Night Beyond PS2	Digital Jesters
27TH	Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney DS	Capcom
27TH	The Roots PC	Ascaron
27TH	Megaman Battle Network 5: Double Team GBA	Capcom
27TH	Tales of Eternia PSP	Ubisoft
27TH	Aquanox - Angel Tears XBOX	JoWood
27TH	Star Wars: Episode 3 - Revenge of the Sith PSP	Ubisoft
27TH	Midway Arcade Treasures PSP	Midway
27TH	We Love Katamari PS2	EA

FEBRUARY

3RD	Pac-Man World 3 XBOX CUBE	Outsource
3RD	Namco Arcade 50th Anniversary XBOX CUBE	Namco
10TH	Disney's Chicken Little PS2 XBOX PC CUBE GBA	TBC
10TH	Heart of Empire: Rome PC	Deep Silver
17TH	Panzer Elite Action PS2 XBOX	JoWood
24TH	Animal Crossing DS	Nintendo
24TH	Marc Ecko's Getting Up - Contents Under Pressure PS2 XBOX PC	Atari
10TH	Ghost Wars PC	HIP Interactive
10TH	Pacific Storm PC	Buka
10TH	Tycoon City: New York PC	Atari
10TH	Shadow of the Colossus PS2	Sony
10TH	Rise & Fall: Civilizations At War PC	Midway
10TH	Dead or Alive 4 360	Tecmo
10TH	Final Fantasy 12 PS2	Square Enix

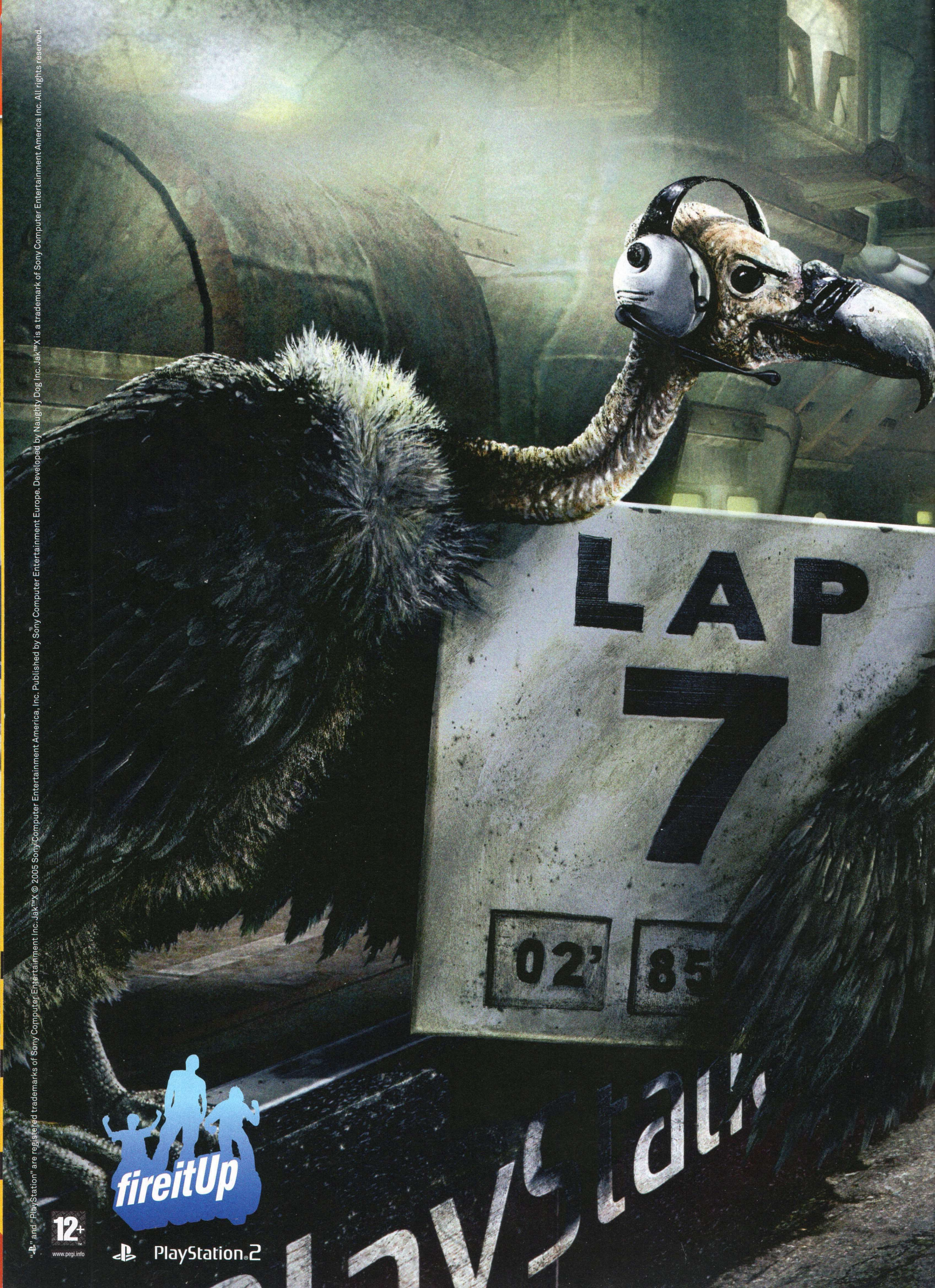
MARCH

1ST	Zero Tolerance - City Under Fire XBOX	Eidos
1ST	Full Spectrum Warrior 2: Ten Hammers PS2 XBOX PC	THQ
1ST	Commandos Strike Force XBOX PC	Eidos
1ST	City of the Dead XBOX PC	TBC
3RD	Black PS2	EA
24TH	The Elder Scrolls 4: Oblivion PC 360	2K Games
24TH	Infected PSP	Majesco
24TH	Battlestations: Midway Giz	Gizmondo
31ST	Pear & Respect PS2 XBOX	Midway
31ST	Armoured Core: Formula Front - Special Edition PSP	Agetec
31ST	Custom Robo GX GBA	Nintendo

TO BE CONFIRMED

TBC	Disney's The Wild GBA DS	TBC
TBC	24: The Game PS2	Sony
TBC	25 to Life PS2 XBOX	Eidos
TBC	Alan Wake PC 360	TBC
TBC	Bully PS2 XBOX	Rockstar
TBC	Dead Rising 360	Capcom
TBC	Gears of War 360	Microsoft
TBC	Half Life 2: Aftermath PC	EA
TBC	Hellgate: London PC	Namco
TBC	Hitman: Blood Money PS2 XBOX PC	Eidos
TBC	Ninety-Nine Nights 360	Microsoft
TBC	Prey PC, 360	2K Games
TBC	S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl PC	THQ
TBC	Scarface PS2 XBOX 360	Vivendi
TBC	Gothic 3 PC	JoWood
TBC	Timeshift 360	Atari
TBC	Tomb Raider: Legend PS2 XBOX PC	Eidos

Heed Our Warning:
Here at *GM* we endeavour to bring you the most accurate release dates around. But the games industry is a fickle beast so bear in mind that the info above is constantly on the move. If it doesn't come out when we say it does, blame someone else!



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GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

YOUR VOTES HAVE BEEN COUNTED FOR THE BIGGEST GAMES AWARDS OF THE YEAR...

GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS 2005

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THE CARPHONE WAREHOUSE HANDHELD GAME OF THE YEAR

SUPER MARIO 64 DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

RUNNERS UP:
- Burnout Legends (Electronic Arts)
- Advance Wars: Dual Strike (Nintendo)

THE SUN ONLINE – ONLINE GAME OF THE YEAR

WORLD OF WARCRAFT
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI

RUNNERS UP:
- Battlefield (Electronic Arts)
- EVE Online: Exodus (CCP)

PC GAME OF THE YEAR

HALF-LIFE 2
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI

RUNNERS UP:
- Football Manager 2005 (Sega)
- Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War - Winter Assult (THQ)

GAMECUBE GAME OF THE YEAR

RESIDENT EVIL 4
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

RUNNERS UP:
- Call of Duty: Finest Hour (Activision)
- The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures (Nintendo)

XBOX GAME OF THE YEAR

HALO 2
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

RUNNERS UP:
- Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (Rockstar)
- Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords (LucasArts)

PLAYSTATION 2 GAME OF THE YEAR

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR

RUNNERS UP:
- Pro Evolution Soccer 4 (Konami)
- Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (Konami)

BEST FILM-BASED GAME OF 2005

RESIDENT EVIL 4
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

RUNNERS UP:
- Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords (LucasArts)
- Spider-Man 2 (Activision)

THE GIRLS' CHOICE OF 2005

THE SIMS 2
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS

RUNNERS UP:
- Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (Rockstar)
- Resident Evil 4 (Capcom)

IN STOCK RETAILER OF THE YEAR

PLAY.COM

RUNNERS UP:
- Gameplay
- GAME

HERO OF 2005

CJ
FROM GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

RUNNERS UP:
- Gordon Freeman (from Half-Life 2)
- Master Chief (from Halo 2)

VILLAIN OF 2005

OFFICER TENPENNY
FROM GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

RUNNERS UP:
- Saddler (from Resident Evil 4)
- Dr Breen (from Half-Life 2)

RADIO 1'S BEST GAME SOUNDTRACK OF 2005

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR

RUNNERS UP:
- Halo 2 (Microsoft)
- Need for Speed Underground 2 (EA)

GAME ONE – INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

SONY PSP

RUNNERS UP:
- Nintendo DS
- Valve Steam

THE SUN ONE TO WATCH FOR 2006

RESIDENT EVIL 5
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

RUNNERS UP:
- Final Fantasy XII (Square Enix)
- Age of Empires III (Microsoft)

EDITORS' UNSUNG HERO OF THE YEAR

FAHRENHEIT
PUBLISHER: ATARI

NOMINATED:
- God of War (Sony)
- Psychonauts (THQ)

THE ONE TO WATCH FOR XMAS 2005

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

RUNNERS UP:
- Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories (Rockstar)
- Call of Duty 2 (Activision)

SONOPRESS – PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

NINTENDO

RUNNERS UP:
- Rockstar Games
- THQ

EDITORS' GAME OF THE YEAR

RESIDENT EVIL 4
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

RUNNERS UP:
- Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas(Rockstar)
- Pro Evolution Soccer 4 (Konami)

NUTS MAGAZINE ULTIMATE GAME OF THE YEAR

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR

RUNNERS UP:
- EVE Online: Exodus (CCP)
- Resident Evil 4 (Capcom)

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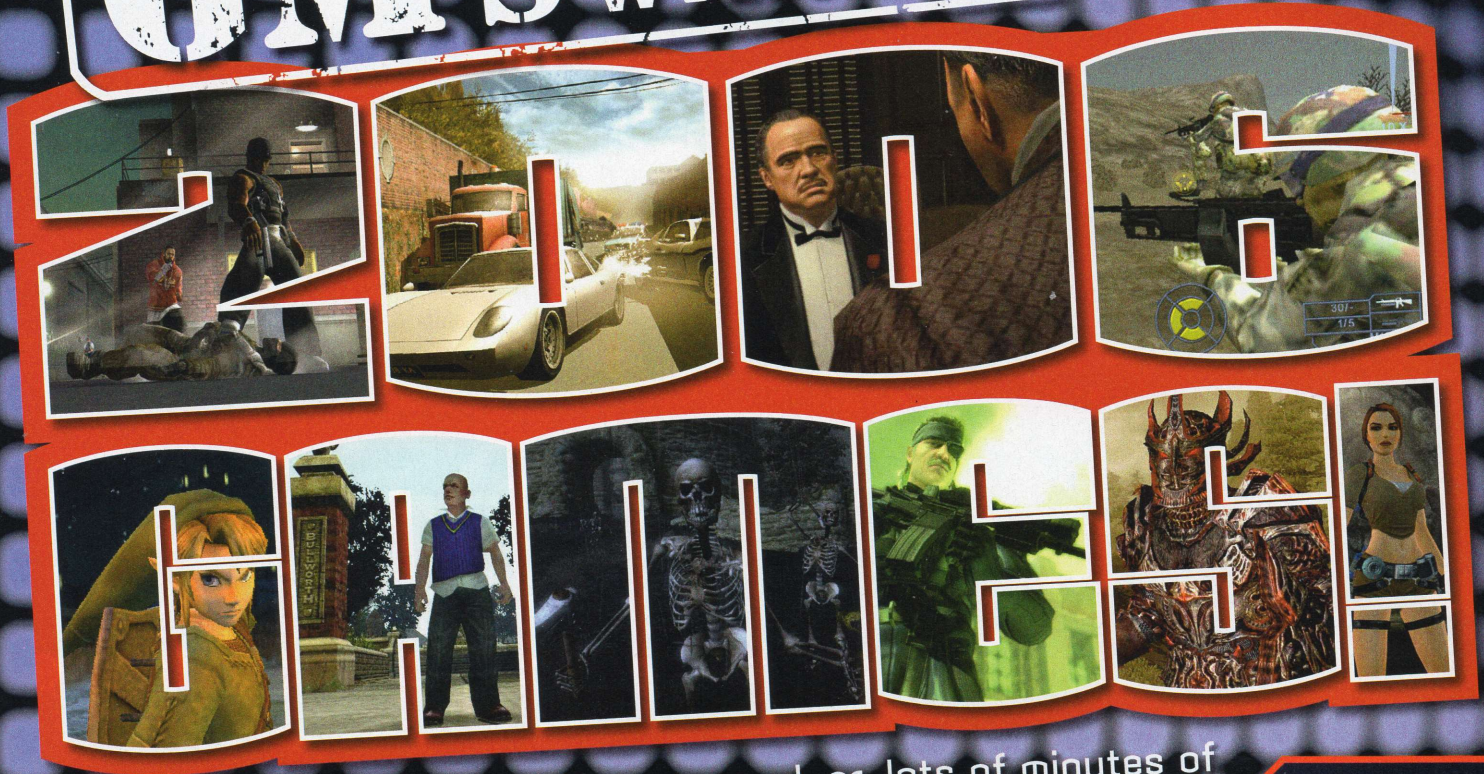
GM's MOST WANTED



12 months, 365 days, 8760 hours and, er, lots of minutes of gaming await! Here's every game you need to know about, and this being *GM*, we've revealed them on EVERY machine!

Forget the parties, the fireworks and even the inevitable ITV *Bond* film showing on Jan 1st, there's only one thing about a whole new year kicking off that's got us excited: new games and new consoles. While the Christmas issue of *Radio Times* might be coming to an end, marking the inescapable passing of time (a bad thing) there's – yay! – a good chance some of us have new consoles under the telly to feed with games. Or at least some cash or vouchers to start saving for that special game. So here's everything you should get excited about in 2006 on every format. We've left no software publisher unhassled and no developer's inbox without a pleading email for new info or screens. (We know that holiday message bounceback is a lie and you're really there, Shigsy and Hideo!) We hope you enjoy the results. And make sure you stay with *GamesMaster* for what's likely to be one of the most momentous years for gaming since records began.

HOW IT ALL WORKS

Some things you need to know before we set off into the new year...

MOST WANTED METER
The ONLY scientifically valid way of judging how excited to get about a game!

MOST WANTED RATING
3

2006 HANDS ON VERDICT
If we've been able to play it, we'll tell you exactly what it's like.

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Every game you need to know about and where you'll find it...

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PS3 vs Xbox 360 vs REVOLUTION!

See the console war kick off on page 36

We track the progress of the big three and their next-gen plans.

- OUT: MARCH 2006
- FORMAT: XB 360
- PRICE: £44.99
- DEVELOPER: UBISOFT
- PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
- ONLINE: YES - TBC
- OTHER FORMATS: PS2, XB, PC
- WEB: WWW.SPLINTERCELL.COM
- PLAYERS: 1-6 (ONLINE)

Sam's ditched the black stealth suit for proper clothes this time around. In fact, he's not only ditched it but replaced it with prison overalls.

UPDATE!

WE GET THE WORLD'S FIRST LOOK AT THE NEW SPLINTER CELL

SPLINTER CELL

It's Sam as you've never seen him before...

As the fourth game in an already very successfully tension-filled series, how can *Splinter Cell Double Agent* (as it's now officially called) improve on its predecessors? Well, try this for size: you're Sam Fisher, an ex-agent of a secret government organisation. You've agreed to go NOC (Non-Official Cover), which has meant breaking away from everyone, having your past erased and getting yourself arrested and thrown into prison.

Need to know!

What is it?

The fourth game in the *Splinter Cell* series, this time around Sam's ditching the gadgets and going undercover.

Facts

- The game has been developed separately for Xbox 360, PS2 and XB and PSP. Each will play slightly differently.

Rumour

- *Splinter Cell 5* will be next-gen only.

From the people who made...

Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow.....90%
Splinter Cell Chaos Theory.....93%

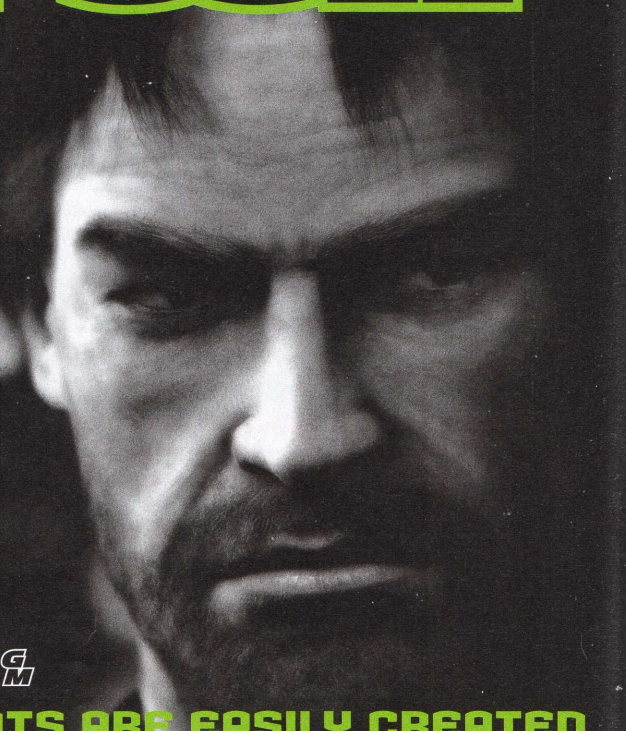
All of this is so that you can infiltrate a dangerous terrorist group. Scenarios in *Splinter Cell Double Agent* are looking like they'll definitely be more gripping than anything you've seen in the previous games. Heart-stopping moments are easily created when you're under constant threat of being discovered doing something you shouldn't be by your new terrorist 'allies'.

Difficult decisions arise all the time as you try not to kill innocent people and even CIA agents while making it appear to your group that you'd be only too willing to do so.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Splinter Cell's development team have thought long and hard about how to treat this new game, which has secretly been in development for the last two years. Their intention is to strip Sam Fisher of his gadgets and let the player find out who he really is. Some of which will be up to you – the game features multiple endings, likely to be determined by how 'good' or 'bad' you decide to be. While killing innocents will gain you the terrorists' trust and allow you to gather evidence on them quicker, it's not going to go down well with the CIA – or be good for Sam's own morale.

It's an interesting twist for the series. And, as expected, the game is looking absolutely stunning on the 360. If you thought *Splinter Cell* was anywhere near to reaching the end of its shelf-life, wait until you see Sam Fisher abseiling 50 floors down the side of a glass atrium while hoards of people party beneath him. Breathtaking stuff. GM



"HEART-STOPPING MOMENTS ARE EASILY CREATED WHEN YOU'RE UNDER CONSTANT THREAT"

When Sam first infiltrates the terrorist organisation known as the JBA, they're thought to be low risk. Sam soon realises they're much more dangerous than the NSA intelligence suggested.

While a lot of this game is set out in the open and in the light, there's still a bit of Sam's trademark stalking in the dark to keep die-hard *Splinter Cell* fans happy.

Levels like this Chang-hei one look incredible on the 360. Abseiling down the side of this building is truly vertigo-inducing, and the graphics are stunningly realistic.

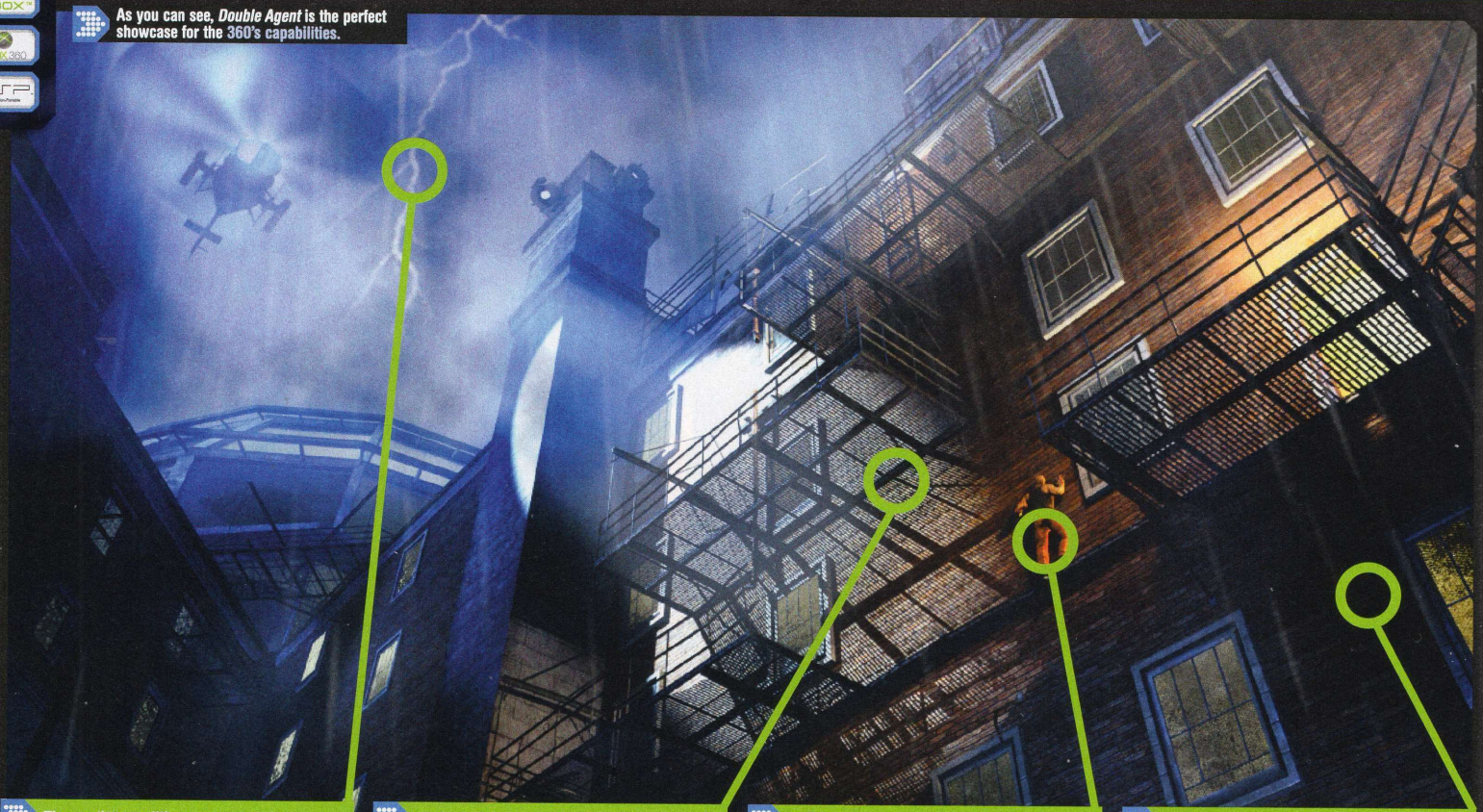
While the game is clearly no James Bond style all-out action game, Sam can swim and even sky-dive this time around to add more variety to the action set pieces.

DOUBLE AGENT

Each cinematic introduction to a level is interactive. So while you're listening to your briefing, you might be able to pull off tricks mid-skydive at the same time. Lambert wouldn't be impressed.

DOUBLE THE DETAIL

Splinter Cell Double Agent looks superb already, and the effects aren't even close to being finished...



As you can see, *Double Agent* is the perfect showcase for the 360's capabilities.

The weather conditions are even more spectacular in *Double Agent*. We've seen the series do some convincing rain and now you'll see snow and even sand storms. As ever, they're not just there to show off; loud thunder can mask any noise you make and a sand storm could make you less visible.

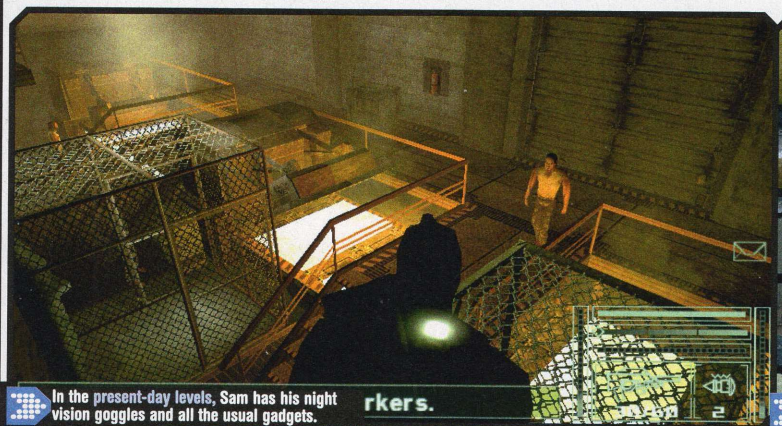
In the opening level, when Sam is breaking out of jail, you get to first see exactly how impressive the environments will be on the 360. You have to make your way to the very top of the sprawling five story prison building where the control room is located. The building looms above you from the prison yard.

Get this – Sam Fisher's face on the 360 contains more polygons than his entire character model did in the last Xbox game. The facial animations for all the characters are amazingly realistic and their movements are smoother than ever.

While some levels take place at night-time where Sam will be pulling off his familiar sneaking moves, there are also plenty of daytime levels planned. One has you making your way through a full-on war zone trying not to get caught up in the conflict. Another takes place in Shanghai on News Year's Eve.

SAM GOES SMALL

Currently entitled *Splinter Cell Essentials*, the PSP version of the game is apparently kinda like *Splinter Cell Double Agent* but then again, sort of not. While it follows the plot of *Double Agent* and features the jail break out level, it also goes back in time and lets you play as Sam before he joined Third Echelon, including levels from when he was in the Navy. Ubisoft is keeping tight-lipped about how this will all link up, but it could be that you'll be playing flashbacks from Sam's past. They are saying that the game will feature nine maps, a revolutionary targeting system and a one-on-one multi-player mode. *Essentials* looks incredibly good on the handheld with all the lighting effects present and correct.

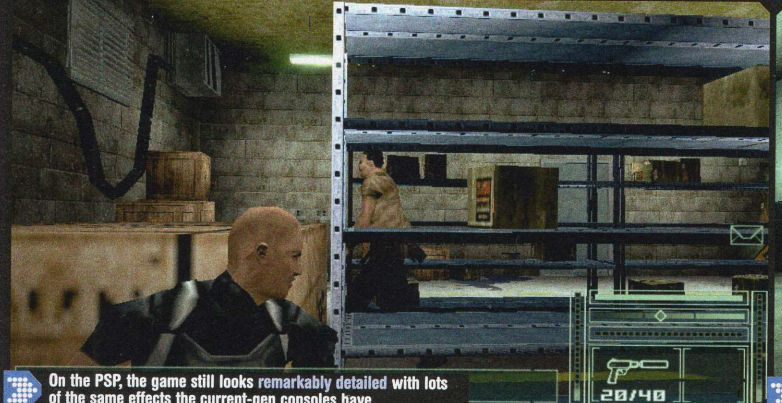


In the present-day levels, Sam has his night vision goggles and all the usual gadgets.

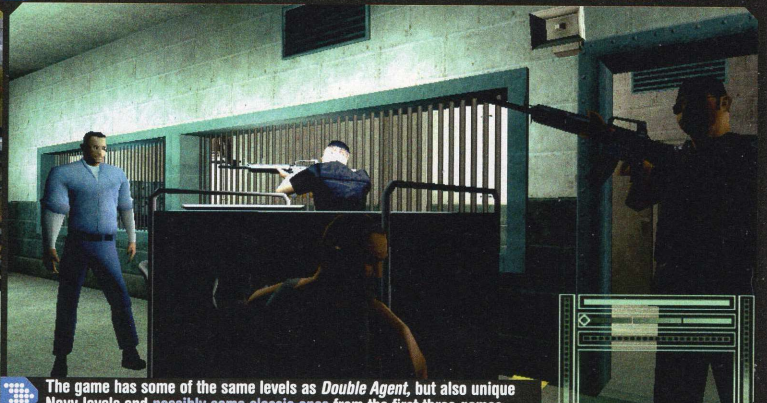
rkers.

Sam sneaking around in the dark with just a silenced pistol for company.

audio file.



On the PSP, the game still looks remarkably detailed with lots of the same effects the current-gen consoles have.



The game has some of the same levels as *Double Agent*, but also unique Navy levels and possibly some classic ones from the first three games.

BREAK OUT

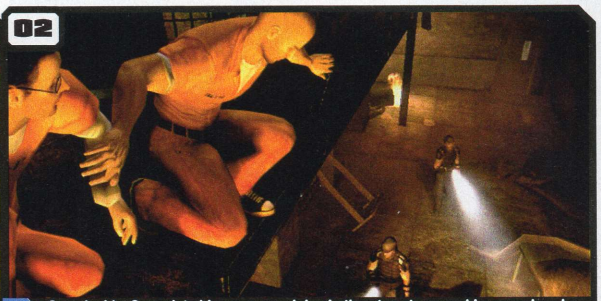
Okay, so when we first heard that Sam's daughter had died, he'd left the NSA behind and been arrested for armed robbery, we assumed Sam was trying to track down his daughter's killer inside prison. We now know that his daughter actually died at the hands of a drunk driver, the effect being that Sam became depressed and was pulled from active duty. Months later, Sam begs Lambert to give him a mission, so Lambert assigns him the job of infiltrating the terrorist group known as the JBA. It's supposed to be a low-risk assignment to ease Sam back into the job, but he soon realises the group is far more dangerous than intelligence first revealed.

To gain access to the group, Sam is framed for a series of bank robberies and sent down. His cell-mate, Jamie, is also his target. After befriending Jamie in jail, the CIA arrange for a riot to break out within the prison and from then on, Sam's on his own for the first time...

01

In order to infiltrate the JBA, Sam pretends he's committed bank robberies and is thrown into jail. His cell mate, Jamie, is his target member of the group.

02

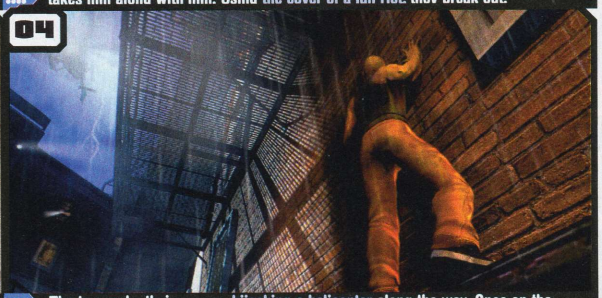


Once inside, Sam plots his escape and Jamie threatens to grass him up unless he takes him along with him. Using the cover of a jail riot, they break out.

03

Jamie is a handy ally to have during the break-out. He can take care of himself and assists you in taking down guards and scaling high fences.

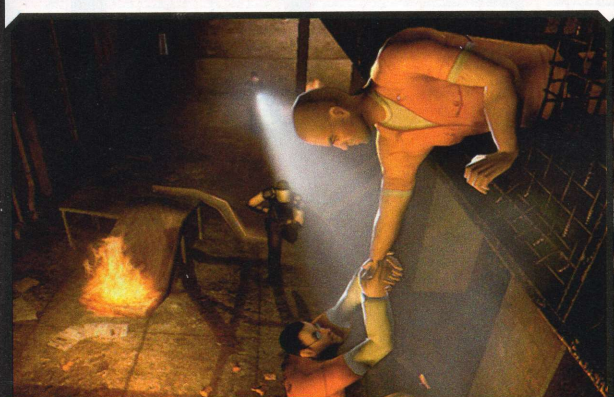
04



The two make their escape, hijacking a helicopter along the way. Once on the outside, Jamie heads to the JBA headquarters, agreeing to let Sam come along.

HELPING HAND

The excellent co-op moves of the last games are back in *Double Agent*, but instead of just being useable in the two-player game, they make an appearance in the single-player game, too. When you're with Jamie or another of the terrorists on a mission, you can initiate co-op moves to get past obstacles. It's a new experience to have team-mates in a *Splinter Cell* game, and one that works very well, thanks to the fact they can take care of themselves, staying hidden in the shadows when enemies are around and helping you out if you're spotted. Later in the game, Ubi tell us there'll be some interesting choices that the player will have to make. For example, do you let a man who has saved you several times in the past die, or save the life of a terrorist? It'll be up to you, and the story will progress differently depending on how you act.



This handy move lets you get a boost-up from Jamie. Then you can drag him up behind you – you need him to follow you every step of the way.

Difficult situations can arise: if a terrorist gets captured, you make the decision whether to kill an innocent person in order to rescue them.

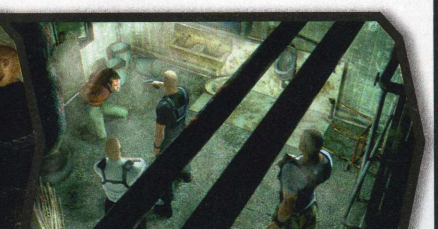
A NEW PLACE TO CALL HOME

One of the most interesting new aspects to *Double Agent* is the fact that missions are broken up with scenes of Sam hanging out in the JBA HQ. The gameplay changes within the HQ, with Sam casually leaning against walls and generally taking it easy while he tries to mingle with the terrorists.

During this time, you can interact with the terrorists to gain intelligence and test their trust levels by seeing how they react to you. The better they feel you've been performing during missions, the more they'll open up and the more areas will be available for you to explore, giving you the opportunity to carry out your overall objectives of investigating the group. Of course, if you're caught snooping where you shouldn't be, it could prove to be very dangerous for you.

If the terrorists think you've been doing well on missions, you'll access more of the HQ.

You have objectives to complete for the JBA and spying objectives to complete for the NSA.



One of the first difficult choices you have to make is whether to execute an innocent man.

HANDS ON VERDICT

PREVIEWER: Kath

Tom Clancy's SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

HOW FINISHED?

CONTROLS

- A Action
- Y Jump
- X Crouch/stealth
- B Aim
- R Shoot/attack

D-pad - Select vision mode/ change weapons or gadgets

WE PLAYED IT AT...

Ubisoft's HQ in Paris.

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] XB multi-player
- [x] PSP version
- [ ] Co-op mode
- [ ] Xbox 360 multi-player

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Your constant link to Lambert via earpiece is no more, so you're much freer with what you can do and when. The 360 can cope with more characters on screen, too. Levels now take place during the day so kiss goodbye to those night-vision goggles.

ANY PROBLEMS?

The Spies vs Merc online game has been done away with on PS2 and XB, to make room for a new, but similar, Spy vs Spy.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Shooting an innocent helicopter pilot. The facial animations look so realistic, so it's a difficult thing to do.

HANDS ON VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Getting shot of Lambert and going rogue
+ Being able to swim and even skydive

GM HATES

- It might not be quite as revolutionary on PS2 and XB

5 4 3 2 1

MOST WANTED METER

Chaos Theory delivered massive levels and amazing online play. *Double Agent* looks set to do that, as well as inject a big next-gen dose of great graphics.

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Splinter Cell Chaos Theory

BIGGEST RIVAL: .....Metal Gear Solid 4

■ OUT: TBC ■ FORMAT: GC ■ PRICE: £39.99
■ DEVELOPER: NINTENDO ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO ■ ONLINE: NO
■ OTHER FORMATS: REVOLUTION? ■ CONTACT: WWW.NINTENDO.COM ■ PLAYERS: 1

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA® Twilight Princess

A Link to the future?

Look at the lad Link...so demure, so innocent. Cute as a button.

But mention the name Ganon and watch how peed off he gets!

WHAT IS IT?

Perhaps second only to King Mario in the bona fide gaming legend stakes, pointy-earned hero of men Link has been saving Princess Zelda – and the land of Hyrule – since we can remember. Faced with his greatest challenge yet, Link'll have to rely on the *beast within* to finally best Ganon. Meanwhile, rumours continue to circulate that the game will launch, or at least be compatible with, Nintendo's upcoming Revolution console...

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

To our unbridled joy, Link's trusty steed Epona makes a return for *Twilight* and she handles more beautifully than ever – she looks stunning too. *Twilight* also looks incredible – much darker and more in keeping with *Ocarina of Time* than 2003's *The Wind Waker*. We're getting really excited about the prospect of Link making his debut on the Revolution... GM

HANDS ON VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ Being reunited with our trusty steed, Epona
+ It could be up to 100 hours long!

GM HATES
– That Nintendo keeps delaying it! Stop playing with out hearts, Ninty

MOST WANTED METER

Destined to be *the* game of 2006, *Zelda* could be the epitome of Nintendo genius and an experience capable of reducing grown men to simpering children.

5 4 3 2 1

DS ■ FROM: SEGA ■ OUT: MARCH

SUPER MONKEY BALL TOUCH AND ROLL

Stroke those cute little monkeys for real...

Stylus plus monkey in ball could equal puzzle nirvana.

WHAT IS IT?

Sega's classic monkey rolling game comes to the DS, with the control system allowing for an even bigger variety of mini-games. Single-player plays much the same as always, with you navigating increasingly difficult courses, although now you can use either the D-pad or stroke the screen to tilt. Two brand new mini-games include the excellent Monkey Wars.

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

Its arcade-style play is perfectly suited to the DS and the multi-player mini-games are a lot of fun. Monkey Wars, a type of first-person monkey shooter, uses a similar control system to *Metroid* and should be worth the money alone. GM

MOST WANTED RATING 5

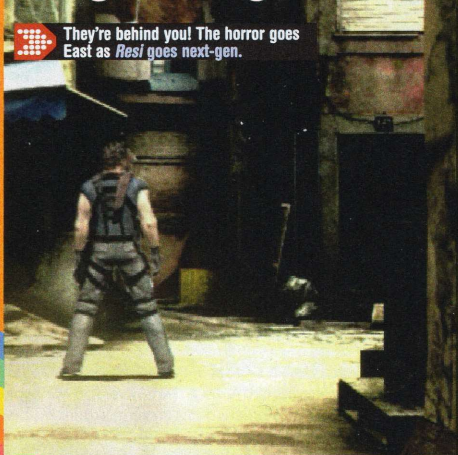
HANDS ON VERDICT

After *Mario Kart* DS, this could be the multi-player game to own. There's tons of variety. And monkeys of course – let's not forget the monkeys.

■ OUT: TBC ■ FORMAT: 360 PS3 ■ DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

RESIDENT EVIL 5

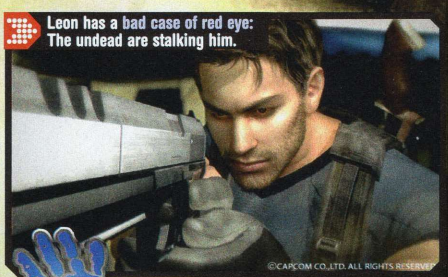
The granddaddy of survival horror is back...



They're behind you! The horror goes East as *Resi* goes next-gen.

WHAT IS IT?

After *Resi 4's* spectacularly successful transformation from slow-paced survival horror to full on actioner comes next-gen *Resident Evil*. Out goes Leon and back comes Chris Redfield as the action is transported from the backwoods of Spain to the desert cities of Arabia. We've already seen evidence that the new zombies can run, but what else lies in wait...?



Leon has a bad case of red eye: The undead are stalking him.

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WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

Triumphed by more than a few members of Team *GM* as *the* best game of all time, the series is now refreshed and revitalised after Resi 4. This could have everything – technical prowess, heart, soul...and *lots of guts*. We're expecting nothing less than Resi at the peak of its powers. GM

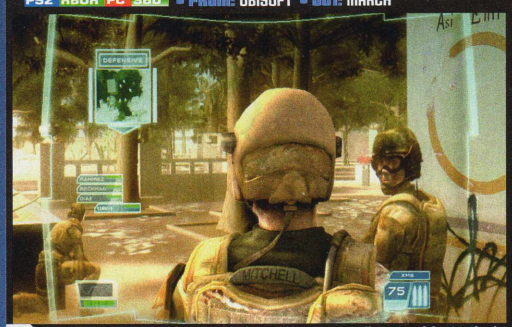
MOST WANTED RATING 5

HANDS ON VERDICT

Yet another early contender for game of 2006. If *Resi 5* provides even half the experience its prequel did we'll be laughing. Sorry, *screaming*.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED

PS2 XBOX PC 360 ■ FROM: UBISOFT ■ OUT: MARCH



Advanced Warfighter's futuristic setting means all sorts of fantastical gadgets have been introduced.

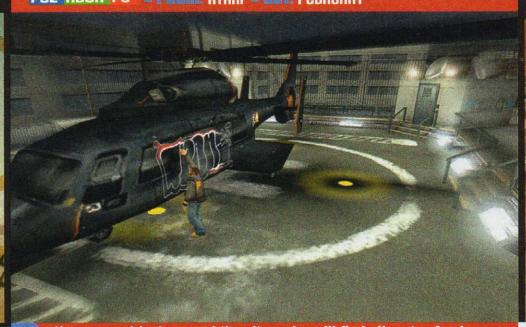
WHAT IS IT? The latest instalment in the *Ghost Recon* series offers X360 and PC owners some of the best graphics and use of the technology yet. **WHY PLAY IT:** Set in 2013, its advanced weapon systems and satellite communication devices mean it's *Ghost Recon* as you know it but with extra bells and whistles.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: Futuristic combat and multi-player and co-op action that's threatening to rule Xbox 360 online, it's already looking stunning.

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP

PS2 XBOX PC ■ FROM: ATARI ■ OUT: FEBRUARY



Have a good look around the city and you'll find all sorts of unique places to 'get up' your dubs, throw-ups and burners.

WHAT IS IT? A third-person action game, your task is to sneak into increasingly dangerous places, daub them with pretty colours then get out in one piece. **WHY PLAY IT:** It's got a bit of everything – stealth, vandalism, a full combat system and huge environments for you to explore in the pursuit of the perfect tag.

MOST WANTED RATING: 3

HANDS ON VERDICT: Surprisingly it's actually pretty good fun to play. As long as you can get over the guilt of kicking in security guards who are just doing their jobs.

THE GODFATHER

PS2 XBOX ■ FROM: EA ■ OUT: MARCH

An accurate portrayal of life as a proper gangster, you can threaten local business men and go on random shooting sprees.

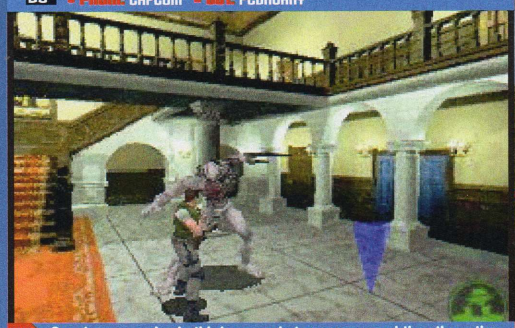
WHAT IS IT? An EA adaptation of the classic films, *The Godfather* lets you relive classic moments from the film as well as various mostly violence-based missions. **WHY YOU'LL PLAY IT:** It's a massive non-linear game, allowing you to go about your task of being accepted into the Corleone family.

MOST WANTED RATING: 3

HANDS ON VERDICT: It looks good and there's plenty to do. Plus, the shooting system lets you callously put bullets in various body parts and leave enemies in agony.

RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE

DS ■ FROM: CAPCOM ■ OUT: FEBRUARY



Gun down enemies in third-person but every now and then the action changes to first-person and you can go on a slashing spree.

WHAT IS IT? The DS remake of classic Resi Evil, you can either play the original game in its entirety or the remake, which incorporates some new stylus-related stuff. **WHY YOU'LL PLAY IT:** At certain points, you can slash zombies using the stylus, whipping it across the touch screen to kill them. *Resi* fans will love it.

MOST WANTED RATING: 3

HANDS ON VERDICT: While the slashing is undoubtedly fun, the new stylus-based puzzles that we saw seemed a bit weak, and it is just a remake at the end of the day.

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

PS2 XBOX PC ■ FROM: CODEMASTERS ■ OUT: FEBRUARY

Pile-ups mid-race are more spectacular than ever in the latest *TOCA*. Cars show proper damage as well, which is satisfying.

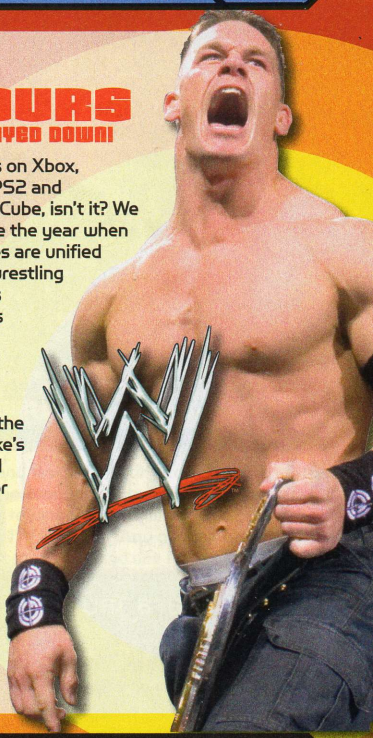
WHAT IS IT? Looking set to become the ultimate TOCA Racing game, this has depth and spectacular new damage on all the cars. **WHY YOU'LL PLAY IT:** If fitting roll cages and squeezing every last ounce of power out of your car is your idea of fun, *TOCA Race Driver 3* is likely to be the racer for you.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: It looks and plays more realistically than ever. Damage to your (and your opponents') cars plays a huge part, as does smashing into things at 150mph.

2006 RUMOURS

SMACK TO BE LAYED DOWN!



It's odd that *RAW* is on Xbox, *SmackDown* is on PS2 and *WrestleMania* is on Cube, isn't it? We reckon 2006 will be the year when all the brawling titles are unified and just one killer wrestling game – our guess is *SmackDown* – rules supreme across all major formats. Midway has also bagged another wrestling licence – the TNA – and with Yuke's having just unveiled *Wrestle Kingdom* for Xbox 360 in Japan, we're expecting to see *SmackDown* being announced for the 360 in the very near future. There's even a WWE game for DS on the horizon!

METROID PRIME: HUNTERS

DS ■ FROM: NINTENDO ■ OUT: 20TH MARCH

Look forward to ball morphing and sci-fi shooting galore in the long-awaited *Metroid Prime: Hunters*.

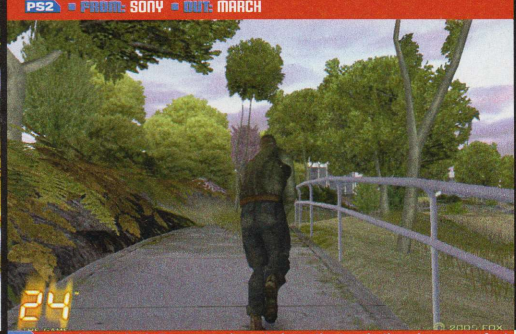
WHAT IS IT? The sci-fi shooter from Nintendo that's been one of the DS's most eagerly anticipated due to the demo that came bundled with the console. **WHY YOU'LL PLAY IT:** The DS control system will make precision shooting simple.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: Single-player is shaping up well but it's multi-player that will really get you going. WiFi play for up to four players includes Deathmatch, too.

24: THE GAME

PS2 ■ FROM: SONY ■ OUT: MARCH



Playing as Jack Bauer, you have to investigate what's going on on-foot, and in-car with plenty of detective work to carry out as well.

WHAT IS IT? A game of the TV series, it's set between series two and three with a unique plot that features all the characters from the programme. **WHY YOU'LL PLAY IT:** It's an intriguing action adventure game based on a top licence.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: *24* fans and gamers alike will be gagging for this slick adaptation of the compelling TV series, which has everything you'd want and more.

TRAUMA CENTRE: UNDER THE KNIFE

DS ■ FROM: CAPCOM ■ OUT: FEBRUARY

Trauma Centre is like an interactive episode of *Casualty*. Cure people of their ailments by removing various internal bits and bobs.

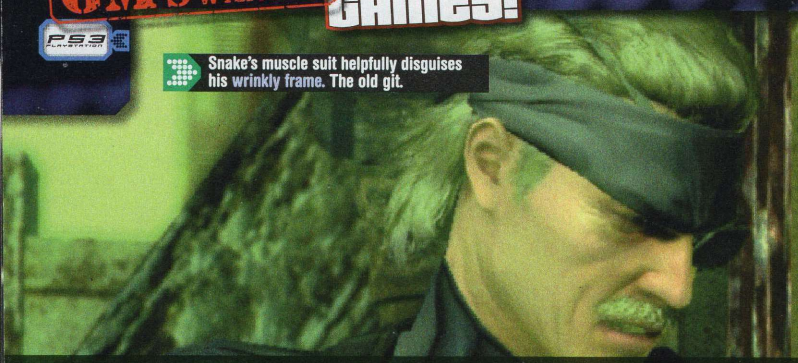
WHAT IS IT? *Trauma Centre* lets you play as a surgeon. You use the stylus to operate on medical conditions. **WHY YOU'LL PLAY IT:** There's also a comprehensive story involving lots of different characters in between the theatre bits.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

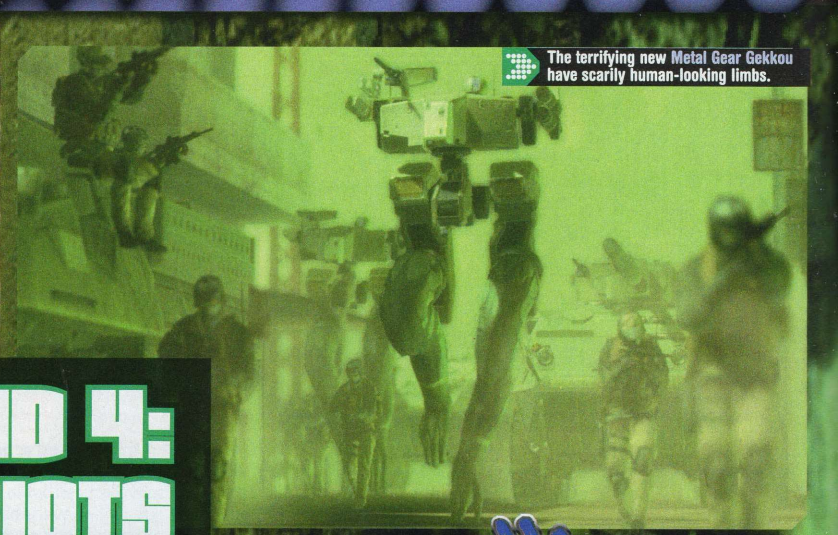
HANDS ON VERDICT: It sounds minging, what with the stylus being used to make incisions, remove tumours and apply bandages, but it's truly unique and lots of fun.

METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

- OUT: TBC
- FORMAT: PS3
- PRICE: £49.99
- DEVELOPER: KONAMI
- PUBLISHER: KONAMI
- ONLINE: TBC
- OTHER FORMATS: NONE
- WEB: WWW.KONAMI.COM
- PLAYERS: 1



Snake's muscle suit helpfully disguises his wrinkly frame. The old git.



The terrifying new Metal Gear Gekkou have scarily human-looking limbs.

Matured like a fine wine...

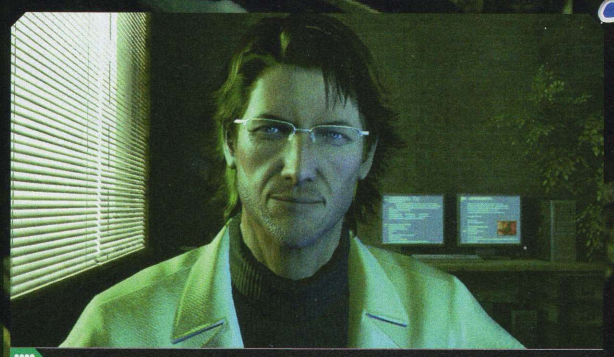
WHAT IS IT?

The Solid one is back – again. But wait, who's this old codger with the eyepatch and a craggy complexion? Snake? Snake! Is it really our hero? Kojima reckons so, and this time he's fighting for his life against bio-mechanic Metal Gears in a new futuristic war-torn city.

Don't worry though, because that grey hair and wrinkled face belies the hard body of a veteran killer. And, with old pals like Otacon and a new miniature robo sidekick along for the ride, how can Snake possibly fail?

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

Even if your stealthy preferences lie with Sam Fisher and the *Splinter Cell* series, there's no denying that *MGS* is one of gaming's greatest institutions. It's a fantastic mix of storytelling flair, memorable heroes and some insane scraps, and it's on PS3!



Otacon: older, wiser and ageing a fair bit more gracefully than poor old Snake...

HANDS ON VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Snake's 'tash. Hope we look that cool when we're that old
+ The kick ass weapons

GM HATES

- The change of emphasis from stealth to gung ho action might deter purists

MOST WANTED METER

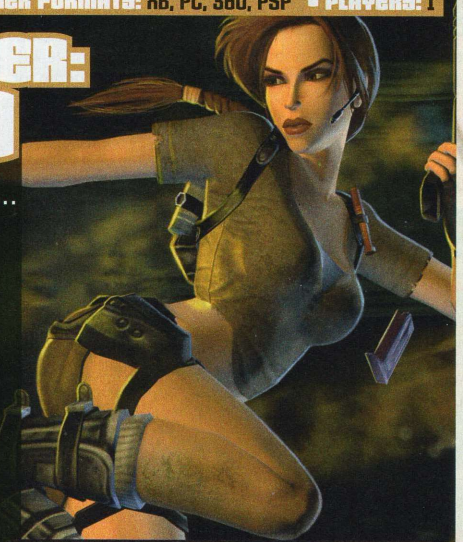
Of all the next-gen footage released so far, *Guns of the Patriots* is arguably the most incredible of all. That old Kojima magic is still very much alive.

5 4 3 2 1

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

- OUT: 24TH FEB
- FORMAT: PS2
- PRICE: £39.99
- DEV: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
- PUB: EIDOS
- OTHER FORMATS: XB, PC, 360, PSP
- PLAYERS: 1

A Lara, Lara laughs...



WHAT IS IT?

One of gaming's most celebrated heroines has turned villainess these past few years, with 2003's *Angel of Darkness* really stinking up the Croft family name. Fear not though Lara fans, because the impressively proportioned one has undergone a total makeover and remerged, phoenix-like, to regain her title of queen babe from Joanna Dark and Samus Aran.

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

The idea of mixing the classic *Tomb Raider* temple-raiding formula with the control mechanics found in hits like *Prince of Persia* and *God of War* leaves us, frankly, salivating. And it's got nothing to do with Lara's svelte form. Honestly.

Is it us, or does Lara look a lot like one of those *Desperate Housewives?*

HANDS ON VERDICT

History tells us not to get carried away, but every time a new *Tomb Raider* title comes o our screens we can't help but get all excited.

MOST WANTED RATING 4

OKAMI

- OUT: TBC
- FORMAT: PS2
- PRICE: £39.99
- DEV: CAPCOM
- PUB: CAPCOM
- OTHER FORMATS: NONE
- PLAYERS: 1

Original videogames are biting back...

Imagine wounding foes by 'drawing' your attacks upon them.

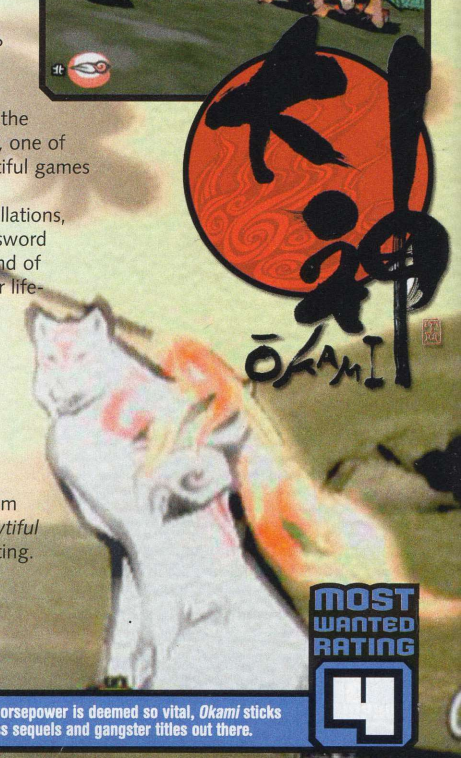
WHAT IS IT?

Ever played as an albino wolf before? Who happens to be the sun goddess Amaterasu? And is ridden by a fairy? Nope, us neither. Well, that's exactly the premise behind the dreamlike *Okami*, one of the most original, bizarre, plain beautiful games we've seen in years.

'Draw' bridges, 'paint' star constellations, attack enemies by literally 'drawing' sword slashes upon their bodies – it's the kind of startling innovation that can make for life-changing games.

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

Okami is, quite simply, spellbinding. It's like *Alice in Wonderland* mixed with *Peter Pan*, with a hefty dose of anime and a sprinkling of Japanese folklore added for good measure. From the same studio that brought us *Viewtiful Joe*, this could be completely enchanting.



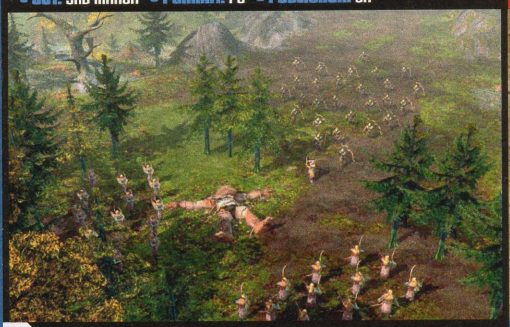
HANDS ON VERDICT

In an age where technical horsepower is deemed so vital, *Okami* sticks two fingers up at the endless sequels and gangster titles out there.

MOST WANTED RATING 4

LOTR: BATTLE FOR MIDDLE EARTH 2

OUT: 3RD MARCH ■ FORMAT: PC ■ PUBLISHER: EA



The bow is mightier than the club, as these crafty elves prove.

WHAT IS IT? More RTS action set in Middle Earth. Although the first entry was disappointing, this vastly more ambitious sequel looks amazing. **WHY PLAY IT** It's one of the most beautiful looking titles we've ever seen, and with re-envisionings of creatures only previously read about it'll be a real treat for *LOTR* fans.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: As much fun as being holed up in Bag End with Frodo, Samwise and a couple of flagons of ale. Set to eclipse the first *Battle* in every way.

FEEL THE MAGIC 2

OUT: TBC ■ FORMAT: DS ■ PUBLISHER: SEGA

Mmm...fancy a knee massage darling? Looks like we're in there. Not sure about the neon orange dress, though, or the matching shoes.

WHAT IS IT? A wacky action/puzzle game consisting of tons of short mini-games that make heavy use of the DS's interactive features. Think *WarioWare*, but with a story. **WHY PLAY IT** We never tire of using all of the DS's unique abilities. Whether it's blowing into a mike or using the stylus, we loved the original.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: Up there with *Another Code*, *WarioWare* and *Pac Pix* as the most innovative DS title of the lot, we can't wait to *Feel the Magic* again.

CHIBI-ROBO

OUT: MARCH ■ FORMAT: GC ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

Look at him! We mean, just look! Isn't he just the cutest piece of tin *ever?* The Sanderson family seem to think so, anyway.

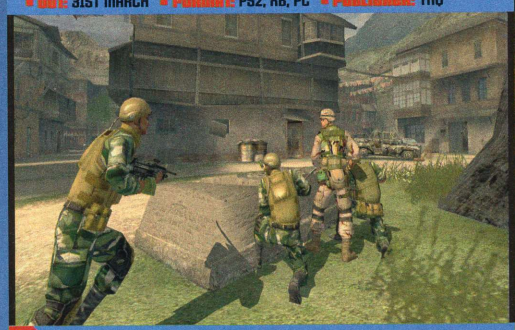
WHAT IS IT? The Sandersons are your typical American family. Enter Chibi-Robo, the ultimate in high-tech, house-helper technology. **WHY PLAY IT** It's a totally unique, typically Nintendo take on... um, housework! It's also seriously sweet – who wouldn't want to make little Chibi a happy chap?

MOST WANTED RATING: 3

HANDS ON VERDICT: A free-roaming chore 'em up, Chibi will at least let you garner some understanding as to what your poor mum has to put up with every day.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS

OUT: 31ST MARCH ■ FORMAT: PS2, XB, PC ■ PUBLISHER: THQ



Carefully, mind, or you'll wipe out another squad.

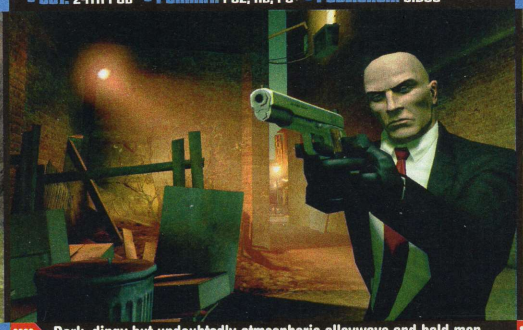
WHAT IS IT? The sequel to one of the most intense strategic combat sims we've ever been forced to endure. As squad leader, coordinate the actions of multiple infantry squads, guiding them through a variety of hostile environments. **WHY PLAY IT** If you've ever thought of joining the armed forces, play this first.

MOST WANTED RATING: 3

HANDS ON VERDICT: Not everyone's cup of tea, but as far as realistic combat simulators go hardcore squaddies can't go far wrong with *Ten Hammers*.

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

OUT: 24TH FEB ■ FORMAT: PS2, XB, PC ■ PUBLISHER: EIDOS



Dark, dingy but undoubtedly atmospheric alleyways and bald men packing heat. Consider us scared.

WHAT IS IT? *Agent 47* returns for another dose of stealthy butchery. This time he's even able to blow the hard cash he earns on new guns, upgrades and flashy costumes! **WHY PLAY IT** *Hitman's* previously linear horizons have broadened indefinitely and he now prowls through a living, breathing world.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: Contract killing is a laugh at the best of time, but with lashings of next-gen eye candy and new disguises, we can assume this has hit new heights.

STUBBS THE ZOMBIE

OUT: FEBRUARY ■ FORMAT: XB ■ PUBLISHER: THQ

Comedy one-liners and excessive gore abound in *Halo*-meets-*Evil Dead* – Stubbs can even tear off his own arm and control it.

WHAT IS IT? Sick and tired of blasting zombies into oblivion? Then how about taking control of one and wreaking some timely revenge? That's where good old Stubbs comes in... **WHY PLAY IT** Any game where you can tear your own intestines out and use them as a smart bomb is worth a look surely?

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: Anything with ex-Bungee man Alex Seropian at the helm deserves a look, and we've got a lot of time for this hysterical *Rebel without a Pulse*.

PREY

OUT: TBC ■ FORMAT: PC, XB 360 ■ PUBLISHER: 2K GAMES

"Quick, lob that crab at him! That should scare him off. Oh...it didn't. Argh!" This has the greatest visuals this side of *Oblivion*.

WHAT IS IT? An intense sci-fi FPS set aboard a living spaceship, a giant entity that can sense and react to Cherokee garage mechanic hero Tommy's presence. **WHY PLAY IT** State of the FPS art with genuinely alien looking levels and, er, aliens.

MOST WANTED RATING: 4

HANDS ON VERDICT: With *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* slipping yet again, *Prey* would appear to be the great hope for the FPS genre in the first half of 2006. We're excited.

PHOENIX WRIGHT - ACE ATTORNEY

OUT: 10th FEB ■ FORMAT: DS ■ PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

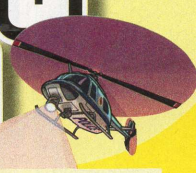
Roaring "Hold it!" into our DS rocks. Didn't make us too popular on the bus, but it was the best fun we've had on public transport.

WHAT IS IT? *LA Law* meets *Akira*, picking up a copy of Phoenix Wright is an open and shut case for wannabe legal eagles. **WHY PLAY IT** The madcap humour, Anime visuals and the prosecutors who'll do *anything* to win means this Phoenix soars.

MOST WANTED RATING: 5

HANDS ON VERDICT: A surprise smash. Twenty hours in and we're still gripped. If you like a good adventure, put *Phoenix* right at the top of your list.

grand theft auto



2006 RUMOURS

GTA 4 FOR PS3?

Rumours abound that there are not one, but *two* new *GTA* games in the pipeline for PSP in 2006. Fantastic news, we're sure you'll agree.

What we *really* want to know, though, is what's going on as far as next-gen is concerned. The next *GTA* will surely be a PS3 exclusive, but does that also mean it'll be a launch title? And will it be online? We can hardly grip our pads with all the excitement.

• OUT: MARCH • FORMAT: XB 360 • DEVELOPER: MICROSOFT

GEARS OF WAR

Grinding into action in the New Year...

WHAT IS IT?

A third-person tactical shoot-'em-up with sumptuous graphics. Taking the role of Marcus Fenix, a leader of a squad of space marines, you must take on the might of the Locus Horde – a deadly alien race in this potentially HUGE first-party 360 game. It's *Halo* meets *Quake* meets *Full Spectrum Warrior*.

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

It will astound you with its incredible visuals. Also, the whole game has been designed to co-operative with other gamers or highly developed AI characters.

Fenix is all attitude and he's armed to the teeth. He's a force to be reckoned with.

Devastating use of dynamic lighting will give *Gears of War* a shock factor few other titles will be able to match...

It's the classic story of man against mutated freak. Get ready for the green blood to flow in rivers...

HANDS ON VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ The incredible visuals. Truly next-gen
+ The fact that it's designed for co-op play

GM HATES

- It's such a dark, intense game. Wouldn't it be great to go alien shooting in a big green field?

MOST WANTED METER

It's visually stunning but we'd love to see more of the gameplay to see if it's going to give anything new to the genre than just glistening rain effects.

5 4 3 2 1

• OUT: FEBRUARY • FORMAT: PS2, XB
• PRICE: TBC • DEVELOPER: CRITERION/EA

BLACK

The *Burnout* of FPS's is here...

WHAT IS IT?

It's the *Burnout* developer's take on the FPS. Bored with dark levels and softly-softly tactical objectives that dominate so many shooters, this is an all out blaster that drops you into an urban warzone with some of the scariest firearms imaginable and lets you get on with creating carnage. Just like *Burnout*, it will be loud and spectacular.

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

This is intending to be a shooter that will stand out from the competition – and it most likely will – with its unapologetic, in-your-face blasting approach and epic Hollywood-style gun battles. If you like your games to be ballsy and unrelenting, then *Black* has been made with you in mind.

Black attempts to recreate the spectacle of a '90's action film.

HANDS ON VERDICT

Shooting the guns is only the beginning of the fun as then it's a case of watching a chain reaction of explosions and tumbling scenery.

MOST WANTED RATING 4

• OUT: MAY • FORMAT: PS2, XB
• PRICE: TBC • DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR

BULLY

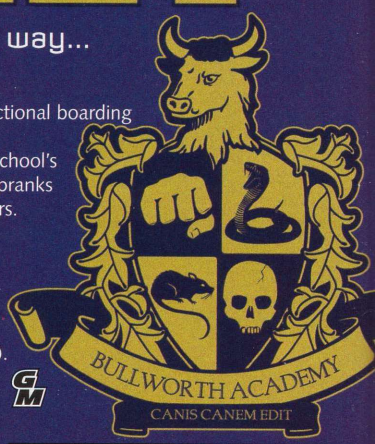
School Daze the Rockstar way...

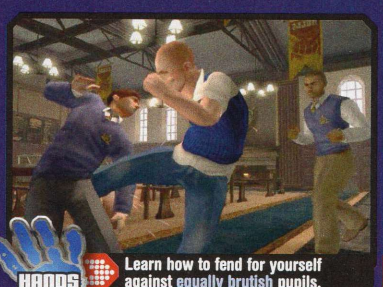
WHAT IS IT?

Rockstar's take on school life takes place in a fictional boarding school called Bullworth Academy. Playing as a teenager called Jimmy, you must navigate the school's social hierarchy, standing up to bullies, playing pranks on other kids and avoiding trouble from teachers.

WHY YOU'LL WANT TO PLAY IT

It's got a sprawling campus to explore, pupils and teachers to interact with and a complex and humorous storyline (according to Rockstar). Plus, it's one of the most original games announced for 2006.





Learn how to fend for yourself against equally brutish pupils.

The cruellest of all games – Dodgeball.

HANDS ON VERDICT

Critics might be expecting *GTA* in a school, but *Bully* is shaping up to be more *Skool Daze* for this generation. Original, free roaming fun.

MOST WANTED RATING 5

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• OUT: 17TH MARCH • FORMAT: PS2, XB • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: REFLECTIONS
• PUBLISHER: ATARI • ONLINE: DEATHMATCH, CAPTURE THE FLAG, DESTRUCTION DERBY
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.ATARI.COM • PLAYERS: 1 (1-8 ONLINE)

DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES

Does it pass first time or crash and burn?

Starting impromptu demolition derbies is good for a laugh.

Kid hits the city and makes good – a good getaway, that is.

Need to know

What is it?

After the car crash that was *Driver 3*, Reflections return to their wheelman roots. Out goes grizzled Tanner, in comes fresh-faced TK – 'the Kid' for *Parallel Lines*.

Facts

- Over 50 missions set in two distinct NY eras
- Fully wreckable rides

From the people who made...

Driver 2.....92%
Driver 3.....75%

Driver: a simple, brilliant game. But remove driver from his vehicle and he's not really a driver anymore, is he? Well, that's precisely why *Driver 3* was so crap. And it's also precisely why *Driver: Parallel Lines* is so great. Confused? Let us tell you why...

Back behind the wheel for up to 90% of the game, *Parallel Lines'* sizable variety of missions include driving when drugged (complete with fancy blurring effects), scaring a crook into turning telltale by driving like a maniac, fixing a car race by taking out our rivals, using a tow truck to pinch classy cars and taking on an armoured car with a trail bike.

Both New York and the vehicles that whizz round the city streets look stunning, while a day/night cycle conveys that illusion of a living, breathing Big Apple. Even better, new wheelman TK (short for 'The Kid', of course) is a lot more savvy than crusty old has-been Tanner. This bright young thing can jack and mod any vehicle in the city, be it banger, saloon, motorbike, limo or even refuse lorry. To test his skills to the limit, we lumped a fat nitrous pack on a truck and hollered like ASBO-packing joyriders as sheer carnage ensued.

ROAD HAZARD

Obviously, with misdemeanours on that epic scale TK soon attracts the attentions of the NYPD. This is where the new felony meter comes in.

There are two different kinds of offence – vehicle-based and personal. If you commit crimes on foot, you'll need to hotfoot it sharpish, but if it's your ride that's interesting the filth, simply ditching it and finding a new set of wheels will solve the problem.

Way before the second sequel made us feel all car sick, the original *Driver's* magic lay in some truly outrageous handling and way-OTT physics. And this tradition has been followed in *Parallel Lines.* Everyone knows that if you drive a car into a lamppost in real life you'll probably end up dead, but in *Driver 4* it's all about the thrill of the chase. Adrenaline, audacious overtaking manoeuvres and reckless speeding is everything – having no fear (or a driving licence) should be a requirement listed on the box of this game.

We don't want to ruin the surprise, but owing to a major plot twist means we'll be playing as TK during two distinct time periods – 1978 and 2006. Whereas hip '70s NY is run down but quirky, present-day Manhattan is cold, bleak and impersonal – all steel and glass skyscrapers. There's a reason for this – but without spoiling the surprise let's just say the second half of *Parallel Lines* is a bit like *Kill Bill* with four wheels...

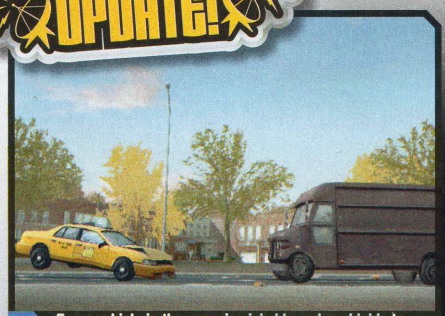
RIDE ON

This latest offering is shaping up to be a crazier ride than two hours in a Vauxhall Corsa with Maureen from *Driving School.* At last, *Driver* is finally back and bang on form. GM

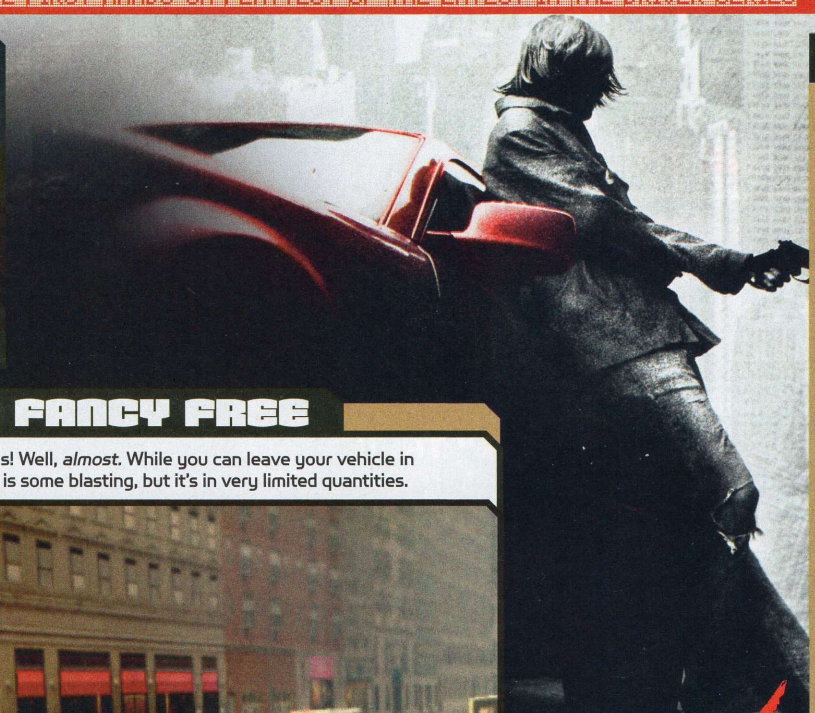
"ADRENALINE, OVERTAKING AND SPEEDING IS EVERYTHING"

UPDATE!

WE GET THE FIRST HANDS-ON PLAYTEST OF THE LATEST IN THE DRIVER SERIES



Every vehicle in the game is nickable and moddable to make it the baddest ride the streets of NY have ever seen.

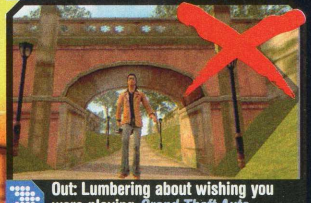


FOOTLOOSE AND FANCY FREE

Hallelujah! No more free-roaming shooting sections! Well, *almost.* While you can leave your vehicle in *Parallel Lines*, it'll mainly be to switch rides. There is some blasting, but it's in very limited quantities.

Tearing around like a demonic Jeremy Clarkson making childish 'vroooom' and 'screeeech' noises.

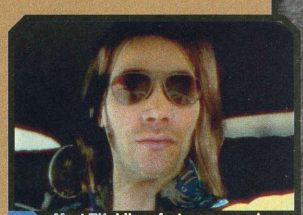
In: Gun combat makes a welcome return, but in very limited quantities.



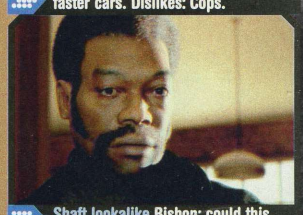
Out: Lumbering about wishing you were playing *Grand Theft Auto.*

CAST AWAY

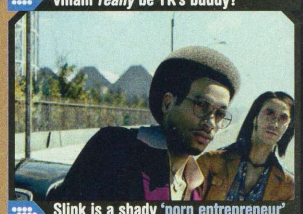
Driver: Parallel Lines features pimps, lap dancers, bent prison wardens, cops, robbers and a bunch of guys with some seriously iffy hairdos...



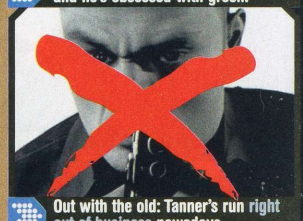
Meet TK. Likes: fast women and faster cars. Dislikes: Cops.



Shaft lookalike Bishop: could this villain *really* be TK's buddy?



Slink is a shady 'porn entrepreneur' and he's obsessed with green.

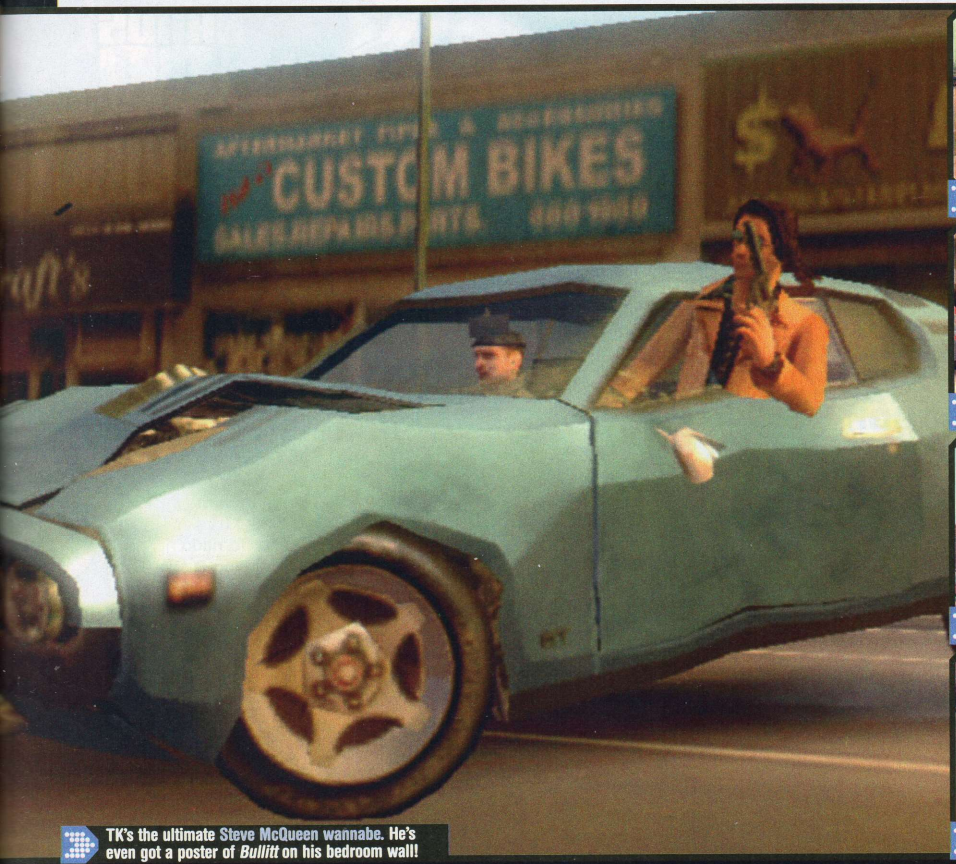


Out with the old: Tanner's run right out of business nowadays...

DRIVER: PARALLEL LIVES

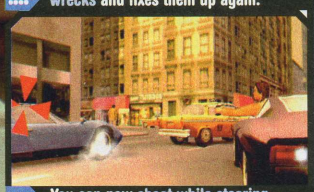
DRIVER

TK will go through more rides than Jay Kay as he makes a name for himself as NY's top wheelman. From cute touches like cracked brake lights and loose bumpers to being riddled with bullet holes and even losing a wheel or three, *Parallel Lines* is more like Reflections' classic PSone game *Destruction Derby* at times. Having shaken off the law, you'll often rev down a back alley driving little more than a burnt out husk...

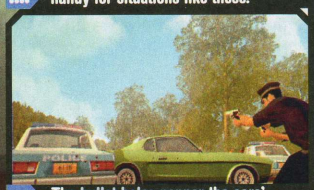


TK's the ultimate Steve McQueen wannabe. He's even got a poster of *Bullitt* on his bedroom wall!

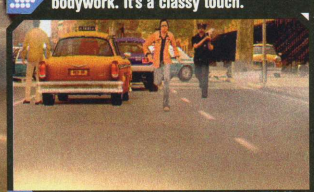
TK's pal Ray takes your smashed wrecks and fixes them up again.



You can now shoot while steering – handy for situations like these.



The bullet holes pepper the cars' bodywork. It's a classy touch.

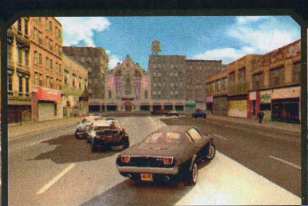


The cops won't hesitate to drop TK if they know he's packing heat.

COPLAND

The strong arm of the law is a constant threat to TK's career, and from what we've played of *Parallel Lines*, those arms have never been better toned...

Fleeing on foot always ends in tears. Find some wheels! Honestly...



Ramming into cop cars is one way to get the filth off your tail...

...but dither too long and they'll send in a chopper to teach you a lesson.

Yep, this really *is* TK. Looks... harder, doesn't he?

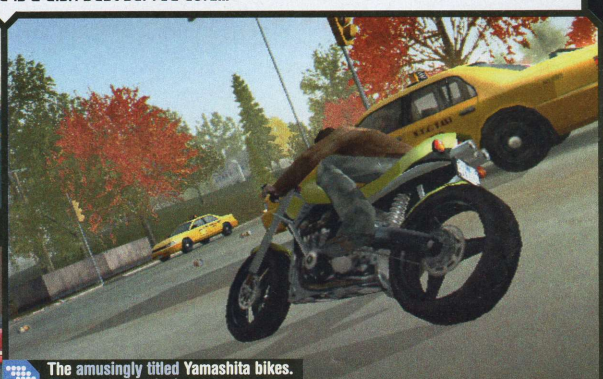
CIRCA 2006

Present day New York is light years away from the warm, fuzzy glow of the '70s. It's all very bleak, depressing and the weather looks freezing, but that'll hardly bother TK, because we all know that revenge is a dish best served cold...

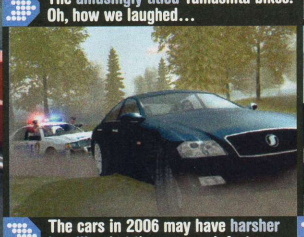
Let your imagination run riot as you mod your wheels in the workshop.

You'll gain access to shotties, mini-guns and rockets.

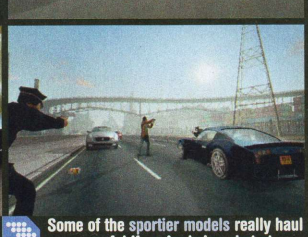
You'll be able to alter brakes, engine, paint schemes, bodywork and add nitrous capabilities.



The amusingly titled Yamashita bikes. Oh, how we laughed...



The cars in 2006 may have harsher handling but they go much faster.



Some of the sportier models really haul ass – useful if you're being shot at.

HANDS ON VERDICT

PREVIEWER: Rob

DRIVER PARALLEL LINES

HOW FINISHED? 35%

CONTROLS

- Brake/Reload
- Enter/Exit vehicle
- Handbreak
- Accelerate
- L1 Lock on
- L3 Crouch
- R1 Shoot/melee

WE PLAYED IT AT...
Reflections in Newcastle

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] '70s New York missions
- [x] Present day missions
- [x] Boss fights!

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Joyously, *Parallel Lines* pretends that *Driver 3* simply never existed. Out go the boats, all that on-foot rubbish and the 'director' features. Back come more forgiving missions and outrageously forgiving car handling.

ANY PROBLEMS?

The framerate chugs at times, but three months of optimisations should sort that. Needless to say, if dangerous driving isn't your thing, stay well away.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Hurtling through the Bronx at 120mph in some modded sporty number, weaving in and out of oncoming traffic to the strains of Mr Blue Sky. Magic.

HANDS ON VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ 70s New York, a wheelman's wet dream
+ Top tunes

GM HATES
- Repetitive missions
- Dodgy gunplay
- Some weak 'boss fights'

5 4 3 2 1

MOST WANTED METER

Revving back to its Hollywood car chase roots, *Parallel Lines* is a welcome injection of N2O for the flagging *Driver* series.

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Driver 2, 92%
BIGGEST RIVAL: .....Grand .....Theft Auto: San Andreas, 98%

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2, XB • PRICE: £39.99
• DEVELOPER: SEGA • PUBLISHER: SEGA • ONLINE: NO
• OTHER FORMATS: GC • WEB: WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM • PLAYERS: 1-4

SONIC RIDERS

Sonic's riding high again...

Sonic's a speedy little fella at the best of times, but give him an air-board and he can really go. *Sonic Riders* is like the Dreamcast's *Trickstyle*, but with Sonic and his fluffy friends whipping around all sorts of courses that have you skimming treetops and hurling around giant loop-the-loops in the sky.

It all looks very pretty and moves extremely fast. Faster still if you pull off tricks on ramps and jumps to build up extra air boost. The trick system doesn't seem particularly complicated – just hit one button and use the analogue stick to change the direction of your flip and ensure you land your air-board the right way up. Using up all your air is a bit more catastrophic than just using all your boost though – run out and your board sinks sadly to the ground leaving you running on-foot while everyone else cruises past you. We can confirm it's not a dignified way to cross any finish line.

ROUGH RIDE

As well as pulling off tricks to get an advantage on other racers, you can ride their turbulence. Turbulence literally sucks you along super-fast, leaving you to just worry about staying on the track.

Although only two of the game's eventual total of 14 tracks are playable at this stage, there's plenty of times when you'll be wishing there were crash barriers in Sonic's world. Usually when you're hurtling around a track suspended miles up from the ground.

Only Grand Prix mode was available for us to check out, where you can choose your character from Sonic and friends at the start of each race.

What we do know for sure is that *Sonic Riders* is looking like a very cool game. At the moment riders are spread out over the huge courses meaning you don't see them for minutes at a time – but if that's sorted out, it'll be fun as well as fast. GM

The GM Know!

What is it?

Sonic's on an air-board in this all out racing game that has plenty of speed.

Facts

- 14 tracks in total
- 16 racers – half of which need to be unlocked to play as them
- Features four-player split-screen

Rumour

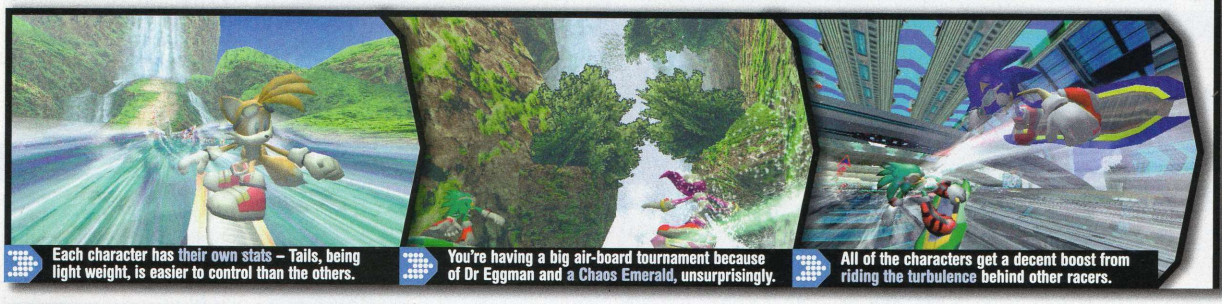
- Sega may release a DS version.

From the people who made...

Super Monkey Ball Deluxe 91%
Sonic Mega Collection Plus 77%

TAIL TELL

There are 16 characters in total in the game. Eight are available from the start and a further eight are unlockable. All the usual faces such as Tails and Knuckles are there, plus some lesser known characters like Jet, otherwise known as Legendary Wind Master. Each character has a unique board with its own stats. So each character's board should feel different to control in the finished game.



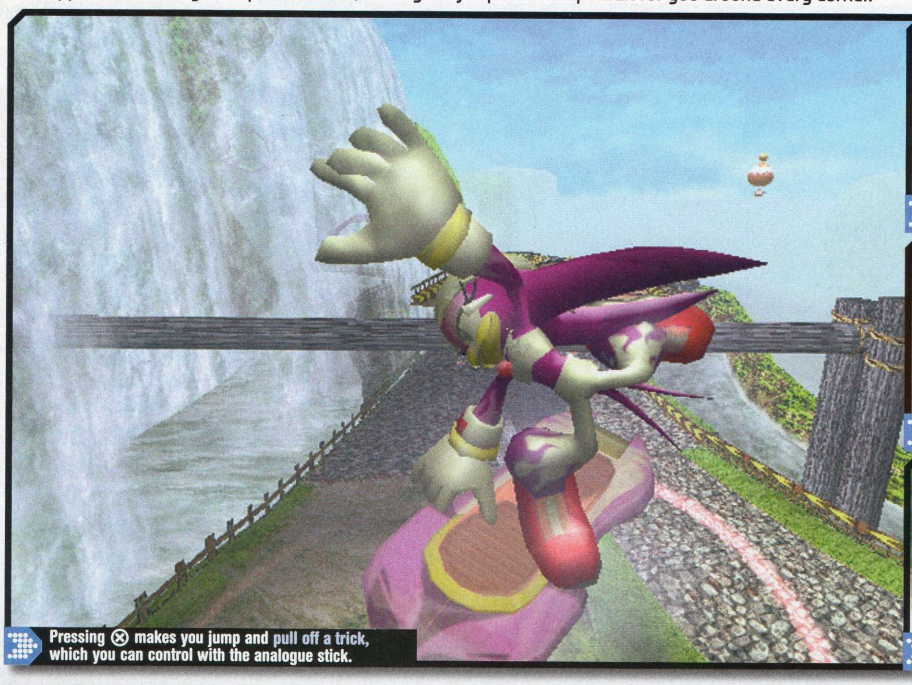
Each character has their own stats – Tails, being light weight, is easier to control than the others.

You're having a big air-board tournament because of Dr Eggman and a Chaos Emerald, unsurprisingly.

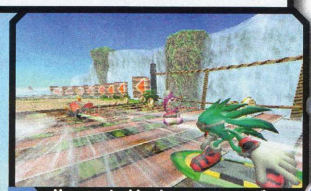
All of the characters get a decent boost from riding the turbulence behind other racers.

BOARD GAME

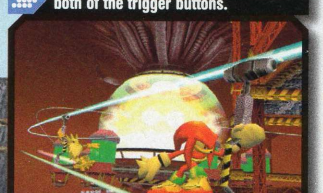
Each track is a fair size for you to race around at high speeds, and the earlier ones will be far easier than later courses. They all have plenty of opportunities for you to pull off tricks, too – giant jumps and ramps wait for you around every corner.



Pressing ⊗ makes you jump and pull off a trick, which you can control with the analogue stick.



You can tackle sharp corners using both of the trigger buttons.



Courses have plenty of unique bits like this to keep you on your toes.

Your air meter will fill up after a trick – use it for a big boost.

HANDS ON VERDICT

PREVIEWER: Kath

SONIC RIDERS

HOW FINISHED? 30%

CONTROLS

- ◎ Boost
- ⊗ Jump
- L1 Sharp turn
- R1 Sharp turn
- L1 + R1 Tornado
- Left analogue stick - steer

WE PLAYED IT AT...

A special Japanese-themed Sega event in London.

WHAT WE PLAYED

- ☑ GP mode
- ☑ First 2 levels
- ☒ Other modes
- ☒ Split screen

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Sonic Riders is a pretty simple game to pick up – the trick system isn't complex and handling your board is pretty easy. It looks impressive, although the sometimes cinematic look makes you feel like you're not really in control of your characters at times.

ANY PROBLEMS?

Skilful boarding doesn't feel like it's being rewarded and even when you think you've messed up, you land safely.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The gorgeous locations – one minute you're riding down a waterfall, the next you're on a huge loop-the-loop in the sky.

HANDS ON VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ The luscious graphics
+ Travelling at 300mph on a board suspended in mid air

GM HATES

- Races often don't feel like races
- Control sometimes feels out of your hands

MOST WANTED METER

Sonic Riders looks the part. If the racing elements of the game end up as good as the visuals, it'll be a unique *Sonic* racing game you'll want to play.

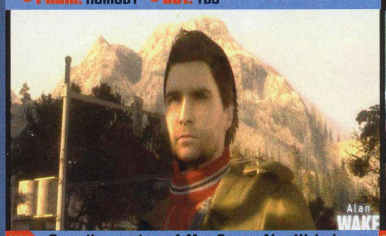
5 4 3 2 1

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Trickstyle, Dreamcast
BIGGEST RIVAL: .....Amped 3

GM's MOST WANTED 2006 GAMES!

ALAN WAKE
360 PS3
FROM: REMEDY OUT: TBC

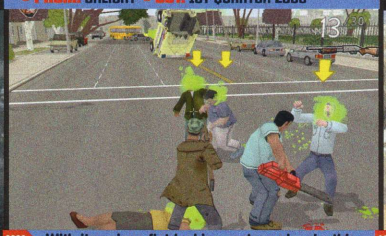


From the creators of *Max Payne*, *Alan Wake* has you playing as man troubled by crazy nightmares.

ALONE IN THE DARK
360
FROM: ATARI OUT: AUTUMN

The creepy survival horror series comes to the 360 complete with stunning next-gen visuals.

AMERICAN MCGEE PRESENTS: BAD DAY LA
XBOX PC
FROM: ENLIGHT OUT: 1ST QUARTER 2006



With its unique flat looking cartoon visuals, this is a game that stands out as being a bit different.

APE ESCAPE 3
PS2
FROM: SONY OUT: MARCH

An impressive third game in the series, with over 430 monkeys to capture and 136 areas.

AUTO ASSAULT
PC
From: NCSOFT OUT: SPRING

This promised to be the fastest, most destruction massively multi-player online game ever.

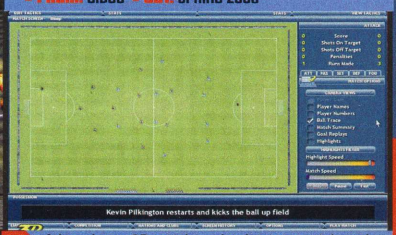
CALL OF CTHULHU: DESTINY'S END
PS2 XBOX PC
FROM: HEADFIRST PRODUCTIONS OUT: SEPTEMBER

Spooky third-person action game that's looking good and features full-on two player co-op play.

CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS
PS2 XBOX
FROM: KONAMI OUT: JANUARY

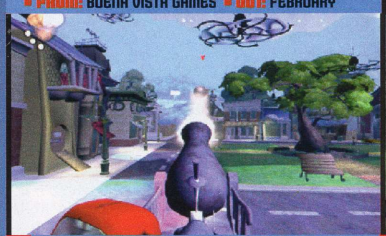
The next instalment of *Castlevania* introduces a new Devil Forgemaster character.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006
PC
FROM: EIDOS OUT: SPRING 2006



A brand new 3D match engine lets you watch each match. You can interact with your squad, too.

CHICKEN LITTLE
PS2 XBOX CUBE PC
FROM: BUENA VISTA GAMES OUT: FEBRUARY



Playing as Chicken Little and his friends, you get to use an arsenal of gadgets like a jetpack.

CHROMEHOUNDS
360
FROM: SEGA OUT: SPRING

Squad-based action that puts you in control of giant military weapons known as HOUNDS.

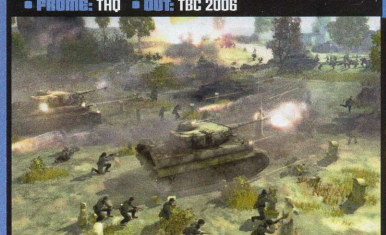
CODE AGE COMMANDERS
PS2
FROM: SQUARE ENIX OUT: TBC

Featuring a plot about the end of the world, this action RPG has fully customisable characters.

2006 RUMOURS
HELLO HALO 3

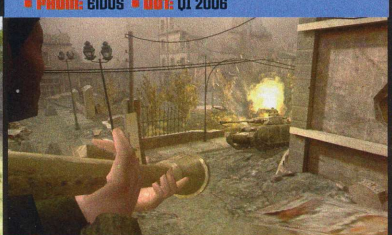
It's in development and that's pretty much all that's known. With thousands still playing *Halo 2* online and the *Halo* movie on its way, Bungie are in no rush to announce details on their latest Xbox 360 project. It's going to be massive, though, and probably the most played online game of all time. An announcement might be made around the time of the PS3 release, just to put a proper dampener on it.

COMPANY OF HEROES
PC
FROM: THQ OUT: TBC 2006



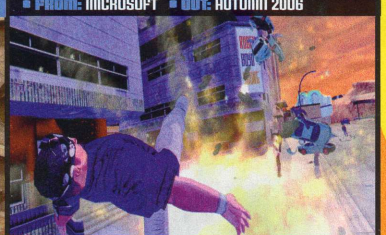
A WW2 real-time strategy game that features plenty of tactical fighting for up to eight players.

COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE
PS2 XBOX PC
FROM: EIDOS OUT: Q1 2006



The fourth in the series and now an FPS as you swap between three types of Special Forces.

CRACKDOWN
360
FROM: MICROSOFT OUT: AUTUMN 2006

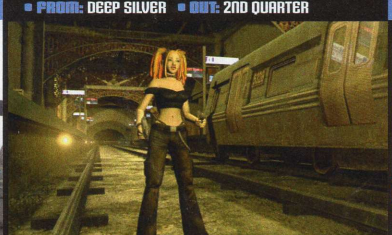


You play as a law enforcer for a secret agency, an agency which uses drugs to enhance agents.

CRASHDAY
PC
FROM: ATARI OUT: FEBRUARY

This all-out destruction derby racer features seven different game modes and 12 vehicles.

D.I.R.T
PS2 PC
FROM: DEEP SILVER OUT: 2ND QUARTER

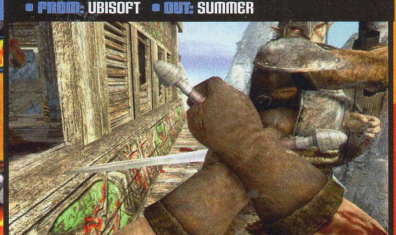


An interesting action adventure game where you can play using stealth, aggression or shooting.

DAIGASSO! BAND BROTHERS
DS
FROM: NINTENDO OUT: 1ST QUARTER

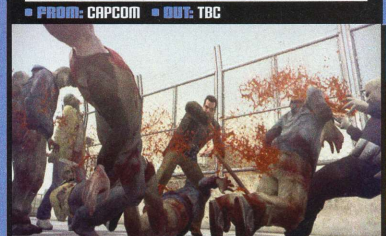
Soon the west will be able to form their own handheld band – it's big in Japan, apparently.

DARK MESSIAH OF MIGHT & MAGIC
FROM: UBISOFT OUT: SUMMER



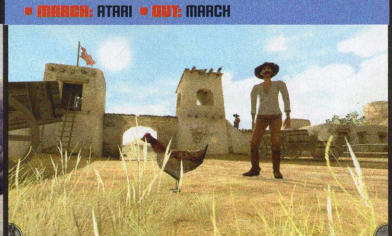
A first person action game set in the fantasy world of *Might & Magic*, this uses the *Half-Life 2* engine.

DEAD RISING
360
FROM: CAPCOM OUT: TBC



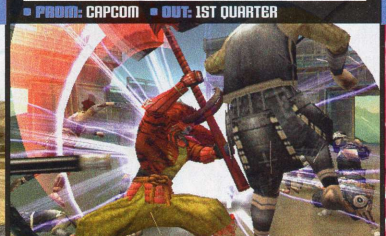
From the company that brought us *Resi* comes *Dead Rising*, a zombie-based horror title.

DESPERADOS 2: COOPER'S REVENGE
PC
FROM: ATARI OUT: MARCH



The latest *Desperados* is a shooter that lets you switch from an isometric to third-person view.

DEVIL KINGS
PS2
FROM: CAPCOM OUT: 1ST QUARTER



A fast-paced action game set in the middle of a war between some feudal lords.

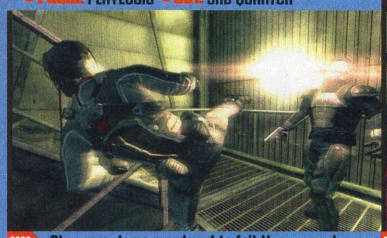
DANCE FACTORY
PS2
FROM: SPRING OUT: CODEMASTERS

Dance the night away with this game that generates dance moves to music of your own creation.

GM's Most Wanted 2006 Games!

Diabolique - Licence to Sin
PC 360

From: Playlogic **Out:** 3rd quarter



Play as a demon, ordered to foil Heaven and restore the balance between good and evil.

Dirge of Cerberus - Final Fantasy 7
PS2

From: Square Enix **Out:** TBC

Rejoin Vincent Valentine and delve back into the world of *FF7* to save Midgard from evil.

Drakengard 2
PS2

From: Square Enix **Out:** March

An RPG set in a world of knights and terrifying dragons that topped the charts in Japan.

Dungeons & Dragons Online: Stormreach
PC

From: Codemasters **Out:** 31st March

Travel to Xen'drik to explore ancient ruins and find the treasures hidden beneath the frontier city.

Electroplankton
DS

From: Nintendo **Out:** January

Slide your stylus across the touch screen and make wonderful music on your Nintendo DS!

Empire Earth 2: The Art of Supremacy
PC

From: Vivendi **Out:** February

Return to the front lines of the greatest battles in history with new civilisations at your command.

Faces of War
PC

From: Ubisoft **Out:** March

Command Allied, Soviet and German troops in decisive WW2 battles in a full 3D environment.

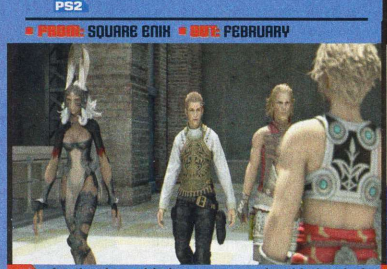
Final Fantasy 11
360

From: Square Enix **Out:** 31st March

The behemoth MMORPG comes to the 360 as you explore the massive world of Vana'diel.

Final Fantasy 12
PS2

From: Square Enix **Out:** February



Another legend is born as a new lovable band of heroes and rogues team up to save Ivalice.

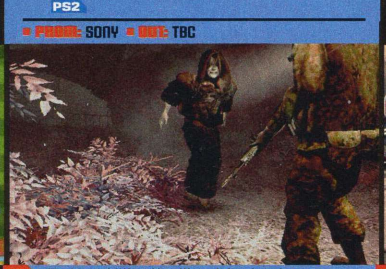
Football Manager 2006
PSP

From: Sega **Out:** 24th March

The footy management sim finally goes portable and legions of men across the country are happy.

Forbidden Siren 2
PS2

From: Sony **Out:** TBC



Explore chilling Yamijima Island and assume control over a range of mysterious characters.

Full Auto
360

From: Sega **Out:** 31st March

Combine tooled-up weapons with destructible urban environments and you have *Full Auto*.

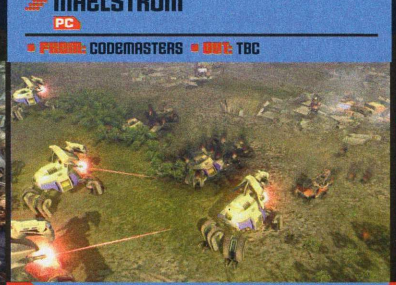
Hellgate: London
PC

From: Namco **Out:** TBC

Enter a demon-ridden FPS world where mankind must meld science and magic to survive.

Maelstrom
PC

From: Codemasters **Out:** TBC



In the wake of an apocalyptic ecological disaster, defend earth from alien invasion in this RTS.

Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier
DS

From: Namco **Out:** Spring

Embark on an epic journey where you must gather, build and customise your very own army.

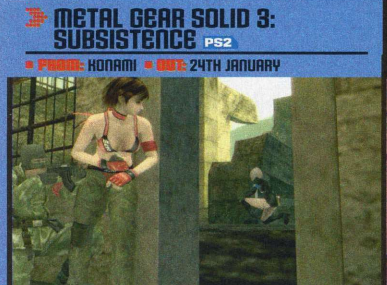
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time
DS

From: Nintendo **Out:** 27th January

Mario and Luigi team up with their young selves on a RPG quest of maniacal proportions.

Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence
PS2

From: Konami **Out:** 24th January



MGS3 gets a shot in the arm with loads of new game modes, online missions and a new camera.

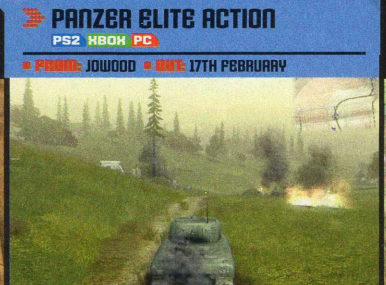
Monster Madness
PC 360

From: Artificial Studios **Out:** TBC

Switch between four-player co-op and online action as you work together to repel creepy monsters.

Panzer Elite Action
PS2 XBOX PC

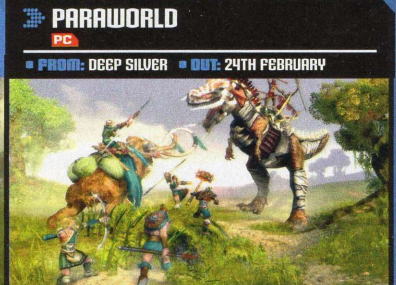
From: JoWood **Out:** 17th February



A fast-paced WW2 shooter where you'll experience combat from inside a tank.

Paraworld
PC

From: Deep Silver **Out:** 24th February



Command warriors and dinos through a prehistoric world as breathtakingly beautiful as it is dangerous.

Phantasy Star Universe
PS2 PC

From: Sega **Out:** Spring

Play as Ethan Waber, a 17-year old cadet intent on saving his sister in this top MMORPG.

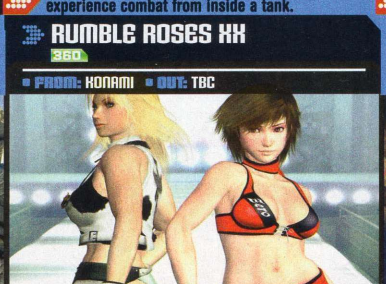
RF Online
PC

From: Codemasters **Out:** TBC

This MMORPG promises a unique blend of magical fantasy mixed with futuristic science-fiction action.

Rumble Roses XX
360

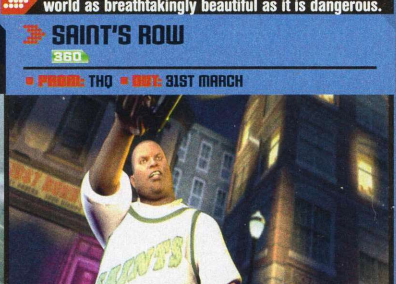
From: Konami **Out:** TBC



The wrestling sim starring a bevy of sexy combatants gets some for next-gen loving.

Saint's Row
360

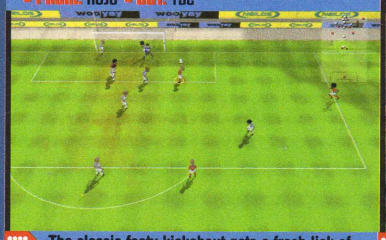
From: THQ **Out:** 31st March



You're a member of the Third Street Saints, battling rival gangs in this third-person actioner.

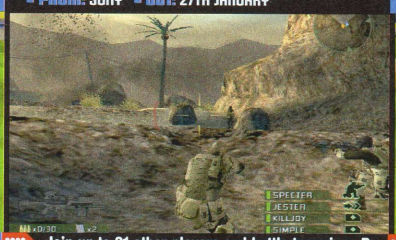
GM's MOST WANTED 2006 GAMES!

SENSIBLE SOCCER
PS2 XBOX PC
FROM: HUJU OUT: TBC



The classic footy kickabout gets a fresh lick of paint and attempts a Maradona-style comeback.

SOCOM 3: U.S. NAVY SEALS
PS2
FROM: SONY OUT: 27TH JANUARY



Join up to 31 other players and battle terrorism. Do you have what it takes to command the SEALs?

SPONGEBOB AND FRIENDS: UNITE!
PS2 CUBE GBA DS
FROM: THQ OUT: TBC

Join SpongeBob SquarePants and, um, friends as they explore Nicktoons in this cutesy adventure.

STARCRAFT: GHOST
PS2 XBOX CUBE
FROM: BLIZZARD OUT: 31TH MARCH

Play as a lethal Ghost operative trained in the arts of espionage and tactical combat in this FPS.

STATE OF EMERGENCY 2
PS2
FROM: PLAYLOGIC OUT: TBC

Team up against the Corporation – again. Drive a range of choppers, boats and tanks.

SUIKODEN TACTICS
PS2
FROM: KONAMI OUT: TBC

A unique spin-off from this RPG, adding new tactical elements to its traditional role-playing basis.

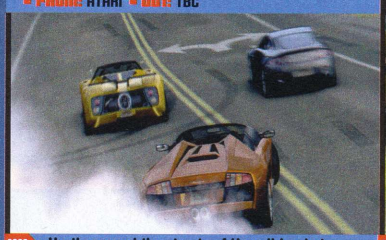
TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE
PS2 CUBE GBA DS
FROM: THQ OUT: 17TH FEBRUARY

Tak's back! Solve more unique puzzles and kick jungle ass with the robust combat system.

TAXI DRIVER
PS2 XBOX
FROM: MAJESCO OUT: TBC

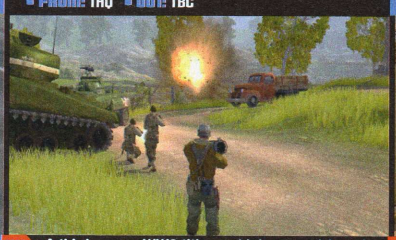
Help psycho Travis Bickle rid the streets of devious characters and put an end to their activities.

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED
360
FROM: ATARI OUT: TBC



Hurtle around the streets of Hawaii in photo-realistic sports cars. A rival to *Project Gotham 3*.

THE OUTFIT
360
FROM: THQ OUT: TBC



A third-person WW2 title combining squad-based combat with destructible environments.

TIMESHIFT
XBOX PC 360
FROM: ATARI OUT: SPRING

Use your Quantum Suit to slow, stop, and reverse the flow of time as you obliterate your enemies.

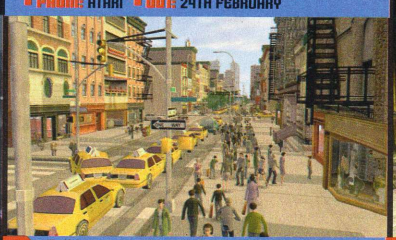
TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX: LOCKDOWN
PC
FROM: UBISOFT OUT: TBC

Coming out a bit later than the console incarnations, *Lockdown* on PC features smoother visuals.

TOO HUMAN
360
FROM: MICROSOFT OUT: TBC

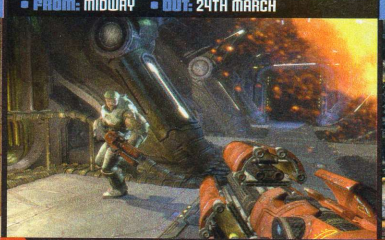
Taking control of Cybernetic God Baldur, you must defend mankind from war machines.

TYCOON CITY: NEW YORK
PC
FROM: ATARI OUT: 24TH FEBRUARY



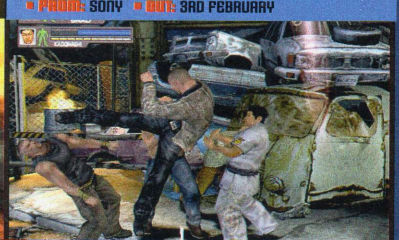
Build your own Manhattan empire and micro-manage it, increasing your reputation as you go.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2007
PC
FROM: MIDWAY OUT: 24TH MARCH



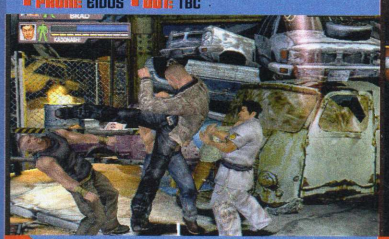
Using the *Unreal Engine 3*, there's no doubt *Unreal Tournament 07* is looking fantastic.

URBAN REIGN
PS2
FROM: SONY OUT: 3RD FEBRUARY



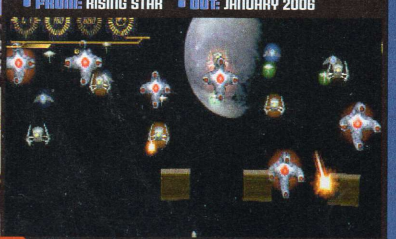
From the makers of *Tekken* comes an urban scrapper where your job is to protect your gang.

ZERO TOLERANCE - CITY UNDER FIRE
PS2 XBOX
FROM: EIDOS OUT: TBC



Experience a year in the unpredictable life of a T-Zero Officer in a city on the brink of collapse...

SPACE INVADERS EVOLUTION
PSP
FROM: RISING STAR OUT: JANUARY 2006



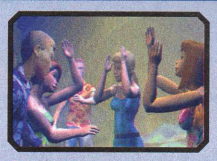
It's *Space Invaders*, but the PSP version features multiple viewpoints and rhythm-action gameplay.

GM'S LEAST WANTED

We treat every game the same when it arrives at *GM* Towers. But these five barely register a flicker on the old Most Wanted Meter.

THE BIBLE GAME
PS2 XBOX GBA
FROM: CRAVE OUT: TBC

We've no problem with the Good Book. It would make a wicked FPS or third-person adventure. However, this interactive quiz would have even Ned Flanders reaching for a copy of *Manhunt*.



GIRLZZ
FROM: DEEP SILVER OUT: Q3 2006

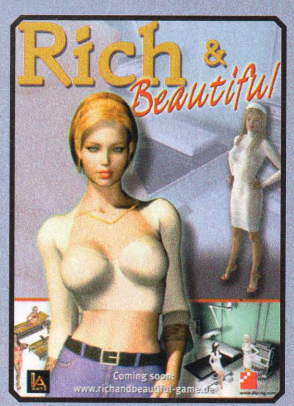
A life sim "for girls by girls" where you buy, wear and trade clothes, shoes etc and try to be popular in the Californian high school scene – which sounds like a nightmare. Not exactly *Bully*, then.

CARE BEAR CARE QUEST
GBA
FROM: FLASHPOINT OUT: 2006

12 bears, each with their own mission: to care for others. No reading skills required, apparently. Although Care-A-Lot land, admittedly, does look lovely.

FROGGER: HELMET CHAOS
GBA
FROM: KONAMI OUT: FEB

Maybe this could be the game when Frogger gets 'it' back and stars in a good game again. But given that the last one was in 1979, our hopes aren't very high.

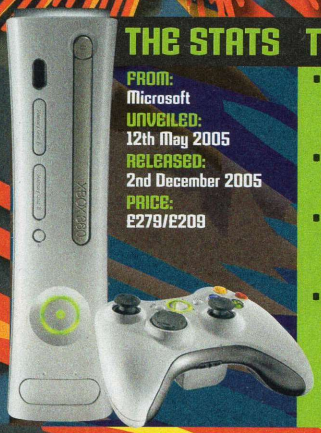


RICH AND BEAUTIFUL
PC
FROM: DTP OUT: TBC

At last, it's that "lifestyle/hospital simulation with slight erotic elements" game we've all been waiting for. Unsurprisingly, it's German. Forget it and play *Trauma Centre* instead.

CONSOLE WAR 2006

Can you feel it? That rumbling beneath your feet? The ground's already shuddering with the approach of 2006's full-on console war. Microsoft's unleashed their next-gen fury early with Xbox 360. But it's over the next 12 months that the battle for your attention – and your wallet – will explode in eye-popping style. We've got all the info you need to choose your side. But whoever you end up fighting for, *everyone's* a winner.



THE STATS

FROM: Microsoft
UNVEILED: 12th May 2005
RELEASED: 2nd December 2005
PRICE: £279/£209

THE SPECS

- THREE SYMMETRICAL CORES: Three digital brains working together
- 500MHZ GPU: Enough to run four *Halo 2s* simultaneously
- 337 MILLION TRANSISTORS: More wires equals faster number-crunch
- 16 GIGAPIXELS PER SECOND FILLRATE: Effects to rival Hollywood movies

WHAT IT DOES

- Not just a console, 360 is an 'entertainment hub' that makes sweet love to DVDS, mp3 players, digicams and even your PC. Hear your own music in *PGR3*, use your face as a GamerTag, and more
- Free Live access: 360 wants you to meet the world
- Plays hundreds (but not all) of your old Xbox discs
- Store saves on the hard drive – then take it to a mate's house
- Blow your eyes out: all games feature crisp HDTV

THE GAMES

- MASS EFFECT: Space quest from *Knights of the Old Republic* team
- HALO 3: Some way off, and wrapped tighter than a sausage roll
- NINETY-NINE NIGHTS: *Kingdom Under Fire* folk's epic RPG
- GEARS OF WAR: Preposterously pretty squad-based shooter
- BLUE DRAGON: Dragon-loaded RPG from ex-*Final Fantasy* boys

This shot from *Ninety-Nines Nights* illustrate the sheer scale of action that the 360 can

Mass Effect from BioWare has you in the role of a keeper of intergalactic peace. With a crewcut

THE STATS

FROM: Nintendo
UNVEILED: 11th May, 2005
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: mid-2006
ESTIMATED PRICE: £200

THE SPECS

- 2 X G5 1.8GHZ CPUS: Same oomph as a £2000 Apple Mac
- HIGH DEF 7.1 SOUND: Room-filling Digital Surround Sound for you
- 6GB DUAL LAYER DISCS: DVD-playing ability is an optional extra
- AROUND 400MB MEMORY: 20 times GameCube for luscious looks

WHAT IT DOES

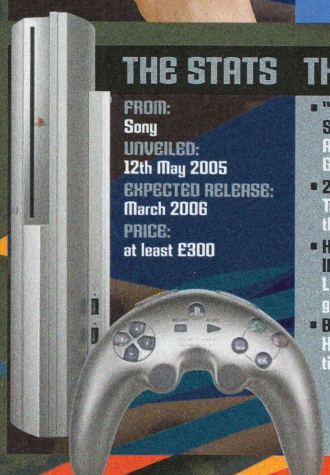
- *That* controller. Revolution's control-sticks don't rock the boat – they turn it into firewood with a twin-action rocket launcher. Swing, point, wave, shake and waggle your games – all without wires
- Eats and plays all GameCube discs without fuss
- Instantly download and play 20 years of Ninty games
- The size of three stacked DVD cases, so it fits any nook
- The only place for Mario, Link and Samus. And Kirby

THE GAMES

- MARIO REVOLUTION: Still just a concept in June. Will it make launch?
- SUPER SMASH BROS: Follow-up to *Melee* will flaunt visual love
- METROID PRIME 3: Shown briefly back in May. Guns, girl, gorgeous
- HOJIMA PRODUCTIONS TITLE: From the *Metal Gear Acid* brains
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: Years off, probably. But it'll be a blinder

This *multi-Mario* demo hinted at what Shigsy has in store.

Super Smash Bros is one game confirmed for the Revolution.



THE STATS

FROM: Sony
UNVEILED: 12th May 2005
EXPECTED RELEASE: March 2006
PRICE: at least £300

THE SPECS

- "REALITY SYNTHESISER": As powerful as two GeForce PC cards
- 2.1 TFLOPS OF POWER: Twice as good at maths than Xbox 360
- HIGH DYNAMIC RANGE IMAGING: Lighting so realistic you'll giggle
- BLU-RAY BD-ROM: Hands DVD its ass – five times more game space

WHAT IT DOES

- The 'Cell Processor' at the heart of PS3 is a monster chip specially designed by Sony's lab demons. Visual splendour is its 'thing': in May, Sony's demo of rubber ducks in a bath had everyone swooning
- Hook up to the internet *while playing a game!*
- Happily gobbles up every type of DVD and CD
- Plays PS2 and PSOne games with ease
- 120 games already on the go from big-name coders

THE GAMES

- VISION GRAN TURISMO: 20 cars in a race and – yes! – car damage
- METAL GEAR SOLID 4: Video of 'Guns of the Patriots' is mindblowing
- KILLZONE 3: Ballsy first-person shooter with visuals to die for
- TEKKEN 6: Scars, skin texture and proper sweat falling down faces
- THE GETAWAY PS3: Part of the E3 PS3 demo. Looked photo-realistic.

The now infamous *Killzone* demonstrated the standard of visuals we can expect.

The Iron Fist Tournament – *Tekken* will continue on the PlayStation 3.

HEAD TO HEAD

NO. OF HITS ON GOOGLE PAGES

Nintendo Revolution:	10,500,000
PlayStation 3:	35,700,000
Xbox 360:	48,800,000

PERCENTAGE OF JAPANESE GAMERS INTERESTED (FAMITSU)

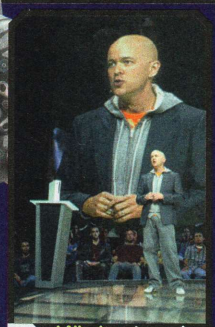
Nintendo Revolution:	36%
PlayStation 3:	62%
Xbox 360:	23.9%

NUMBERS OF GAMES ANNOUNCED

Nintendo Revolution:	49
PlayStation 3:	143
Xbox 360:	182

XBOX 360 vs PS3 vs Revolution!

TIMELINE



J Allard went casual for the 360 unveiling

OCTOBER 2001:
Microsoft's Sandy Duncan spills it: Xbox 2 is on!

JUNE 2002:
Steve Ballmer reckons launch time will be mid-2006.

MARCH 2004:
Crumpling cars and walking beast show system's power.

JUNE 2004:
Spec sheet leaks, revealing Xbox 2's monster guts.

MARCH 2005:
J Allard is your guide to 360's online 'Guide'.

MAY 2005:
Hobbit-man Elijah Wood is first to unveil Xbox 360.

AUGUST 2005:
It's one package for cheapos, one for rich kids.

NOVEMBER 2005:
So much for 2006 – it's out all over the world.

WHAT'S NEXT?:
Rare will be shuffling their sleeves any day now to unveil at least two supersecret games. Then there'll be more new 360 titles than your eyes can take in May.

POTENTIAL PROBS

- 360 owners without the optional hard drive could become second-class citizens, shunned by games that insist on using it
- Even the PSOne outsold the first Xbox in Japan. Microsoft's bunging money east to make 360 a Japanese star: but will it work?

DEVELOPER SPEAK

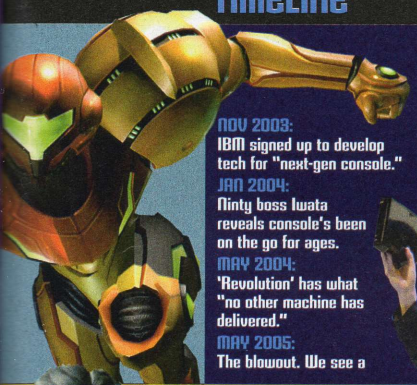
Stefen Boberg

"We'll finally be able to wage war in glorious high-def technicolor... Once we manage to wrestle the 360 hardware into submission, it should prove the best platform yet for online multi-player action." – Stefen *'Battlefield'* Boberg, Digital Illusions.

IMPRESS YOUR MATES!

The Xbox 360 has gone through at least four rumoured names before it stuck with it's snappy title – HomeStation, Xenon, Xbox 2 and Xbox Next.

TIMELINE



NOV 2003:
IBM signed up to develop tech for "next-gen console."

JAN 2004:
Ninty boss Iwata reveals console's been on the go for ages.

MAY 2004:
'Revolution' has what "no other machine has delivered."

MAY 2005:
The blowout. We see a shiny black box, but no controller.

JUN 2005:
Shigsy: "The user interface [will] drive the game design".

SEP 2005:
Amazing new controller seen: whole world needs lie down.

Satoru Iwata holds up the prototype.

OCT 2005:
Iwata promises 2006 launch, and no late delivery for EU.

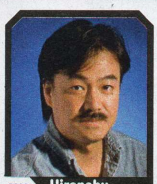
NOV 2005:
Nintendo hints that Japan might not be first to see Revolution.

WHAT'S NEXT?:
The E3 expo in May *must* have playable demos of *Mario, Smash Bros, Metroid* and more – so we finally learn how the controller will actually be used. Plus, release date bean-spillage.

POTENTIAL PROBS

- No true high-def display: so if Microsoft and Sony's focus on HDTV works, Revolution will suffer when people compare in Dixons
- Can developers be bothered to take advantage of the new controller? Do gamers want to play *Mario* with a pair of nunchuks?

DEVELOPER SPEAK



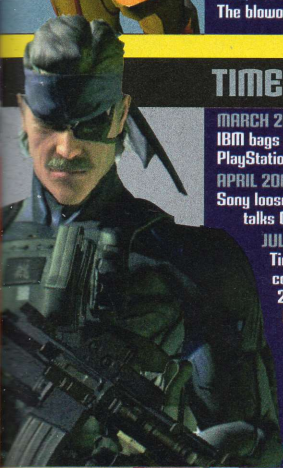
Hironobu Sakaguchi

"When I first saw it, I thought 'It's great!' and 'It's just like Nintendo!' It makes you feel like you're actually touching the screen... game makers, just like normal people, are left excited." -- Hironobu *'Final Fantasy'* Sakaguchi, Mist Walker

IMPRESS YOUR MATES!

This is technically Nintendo's *teenth* console – they released five *Pong*-playing 'TV Game' systems in the '70s.

TIMELINE



MARCH 2001:
IBM bags itself the lucrative PlayStation 3 contract.

APRIL 2004:
Sony loosens it tongue and talks Cell processor.

JULY 2004:
Timetable reveals coders start work 2005 for 2006 launch.

AUGUST 2004:
PS3 will run games on Sony's Blu-Ray discs.

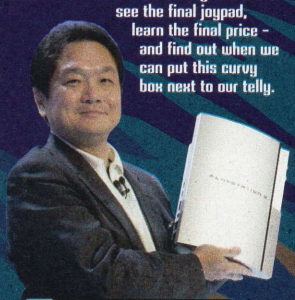
SEPTEMBER 2004:
It's official – Sony is gunning for a 2006 launch.

DECEMBER 2004:
PS3's graphics chip will be knocked up by nVidia.

MARCH 2005:
Eagerly-awaited PS3 unveiling is cancelled. Boo!

MAY 2005:
Ken Kutagari holds his new baby aloft for the cameras.

WHAT'S NEXT?:
Game info and screens will keep trickling out, but it won't be until May that we'll see the final joypad, learn the final price – and find out when we can put this curvy box next to our telly.



Ken Kuturagi looked smug with his PS3.

POTENTIAL PROBS

- Sony president Ken Kutagari reckons PS3 "can't be offered at a price that's targeted towards households". People might keep their cash
- Were May's incredi-demos *really* running on a PS3, or just movies? Sony bent the truth about PlayStation 2's visuals, too...

DEVELOPER SPEAK

Keiji Inafune

"The PlayStation 3 has us really excited!... I believe [it] is one piece of hardware that [will] help us to create some of the most amazing games, limited only by our imagination." Keiji *'Devil May Cry'* Inafune, Capcom.

IMPRESS YOUR MATES!

Ian Pearson, head of the 'Futurology' Unit at BT, reckons PS2 is "1% as powerful as the human brain."

QUOTES

"Well, of course, the idea is that the Revolution will sell and sell and sell so it becomes the standard in the industry." – Satoru Iwata, Nintendo

"Microsoft has stated clearly that it is going after the PlayStation. However, they're going not after the PlayStation 3, but the PlayStation 2." – Ken Kutaragi, Sony

"I absolutely think we're going to kick [Sony's] backsides, so to speak... It's going to be Xbox, and the other guys." – Steve Ballmer, Microsoft.

GM VERDICT

360's audacious early launch has kicked off the console war earlier than anyone imagined. But the threats from the mightily powerful PS3 and genuinely different Revolution means we're in for a hell of a battle, where games will be the winner! Stay with *GM* to find out all the latest info.

Only in PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

JUST CAUSE IS THE MOST AMBITIOUS GAME ON PS2.
DISCOVER WHY, EXCLUSIVELY IN **OPS2**

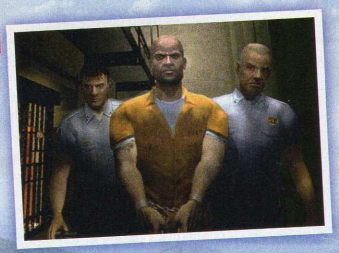
"STAB HIM IN THE EYE!"

We talk to the geniuses behind Shadow Of The Colossus

FIRST LOOK

SAM IN THE SLAMMER!

Has Splinter Cell gone wrong?



PLAY 'EM ALL!

ON THE DEMO DISC...

- Matrix: Path Of Neo
- From Russia With Love
- SingStar '80s
- Without Warning
- more

ON SALE 1 DECEMBER

MAGAZINE + DISC + GUIDE BOOK + FREE POSTER!

Content subject to change. Don't panic though, it probably won't

WE ♥ GAMES

Welcome to the bit of *GM* that's stuffed with your mail, game ideas, unreasonable demands – anything that shows how much we♥games. With a capital ♥!

EMAIL US: gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk, subject heading GMail.
WRITE TO US: GMail, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.
TEXT US: Send GMAIL then your message to 84070. But keep it short!

Mad? Bad? Sad? See how each letter writer's feeling at a glance!

Happy | Mad | Unhappy | Angry | Surprised | Normal

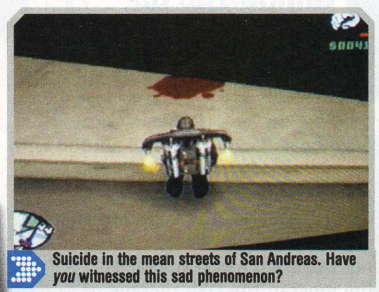
SAN ANDREAS SUICIDES!

Hey GM,

I've got a new one for the *GTA: San Andreas* discoveries addicts out there – suicide jumpers in Las Venturas! I was just going about my business collecting horseshoes with my trusty Jetpack, when all of a sudden I saw this crazy pedestrian standing on top of a building, before hurling herself off!

It wasn't like a glitch, she actually jumped, so I ran to get my digital camera to take a snap. Alas, by the time I returned the body had disappeared! Thankfully, the blood splat remained. Here's the damning evidence for you...

Shane, Dublin



Suicide in the mean streets of San Andreas. Have *you* witnessed this sad phenomenon?

Spooky Shane. *GTA* just keeps on giving. What's next, Parisian-style rioting in the streets of San Andreas?

WESTSIDE WURZELS

Hey GM,

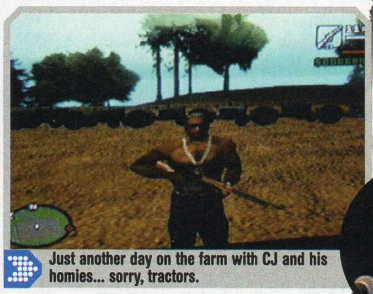
It's me, Shane, again and I'd like to pose a challenge to all the *GTA: San Andreas* players out there. I came up with this mini-game myself a few months back after completing the game 100%. I call it 'The Tractorpillar' and it goes a little something like this...

1. Dress C.J. as a country bumpkin (optional).
2. Head into the countryside and find yourself a tractor.
3. Drive said tractor around, find another tractor and use your tractor's tow-hook to connect the two.
4. Go find *another* tractor with your 'dual' tractor and hook that one on as before, and repeat until you either can't find anymore tractors or the handling gets so insane that you inadvertently fling your monstrous piece of machinery off a cliff (This happens a lot).

I'd love to see how many tractors other gamers can manage 'cos I've only ever got about five or six. It gets really hard after four or five because whenever you turn any corner the back ones fly out and unhook themselves! Hope anyone who tries it enjoys it.

Shane, Dublin

Comedy genius. Well, how about it readers? Will anyone take Shane up at his challenge? Mail those piccies to gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk...



Just another day on the farm with CJ and his homies... sorry, tractors.

FANSITE OF THE MONTH

www.classicgaming.com/castlevania

Castlevania fanboys – finished *Dawn of Sorrow* on DS and now spend your days dribbling with feverish anticipation for *Curse of Darkness* on PS2? Then do something constructive and surf on over to the *Castlevania Dungeon* to read up on Konami's classic series. Storylines, bosses, artwork, emulation, fan fiction – this grisly tomb has it all...

Nominated by Will Taylor, via email

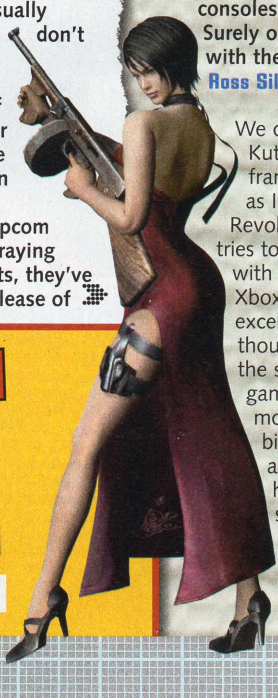
RESI ROCKS

Dear Gamesmaster,

I've always been a fan of *Resident Evil*, right down to Barry's priceless "Is that blood? I hope its not Chris's blood!" line. No, it's tomato sauce Mr Burton. Duh.

Anyway, the saying usually goes, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it', but Capcom's brave reimagining of the series is a thing of true beauty. Now, after an agonising wait, I've finally got to play it on my PS2.

While it's true that Capcom took a major risk in straying from their zombie roots, they've injected a whole new lease of



WIN!

If you're the Star Letter writer, you'll win the game of your choice on any format, courtesy of our mates at Britain's top games store – GAME. Get scribbling and you could be a winner!

gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk

GAME
www.game.uk.com

STAR LETTER!

PAXMAN STUFFING

Hi GM

There I was, sitting at home feeling ever so slightly cynical/disinterested by yet another war of words between all three major players in the forthcoming next-gen console war, when a potential solution suddenly occurred to me.

J Allard: can skateboard!

Why not get the head honchos from Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo to appear on a live national debate quizzed by the master of all things cynical, the politician's 'favourite' – Mr Jeremy Paxman!

For way too long these slimy industry bigwigs have had it *so* easy! We hate to see our politicians get off the hook, so why should it be different with this bunch?

Kutaragi: brain on legs!

I'd love to see 'em squirm, Paxman giving it the whole "Come on, come on!". It'd make a ruddy change from the whole nonsensical zealot/fanboy approach we get everywhere else.

The gaming industry is now more profitable than Hollywood and consoles are no longer 'toys' as such. Surely our industry should be treated with the seriousness it deserves?

Ross Sillifant, Devon

We can see it now Ross... Kutaragi screaming about 120 frames per second PS3 games as Iwata thumps him with a Revolution controller, while Allard tries to hook Jeremy up with a date via Xbox Live. It's an excellent point, though. Given the status of the games industry, most of the bigwigs still act like bickering kids. It hardly helps that the media still think most gamers are either psychopaths or social rejects, meaning we rarely hear any useful debates about the issues that really

Iwata: favours the roll neck!

Gmail Filter

Picking out the special kids from the *GM* mail bag and putting them on their own bus

MOST IRONIC SPAM MAIL: ..... 'OFT and EU host international spam summit'

MOST PSYCHOTIC COMMENT: ..... "It's fun killing people with blue plastic bags" Matthew D, email

MOST INADVERTENT TONGUE TWISTER: ..... "If every *Final Fantasy* is final, why doesn't the fantasy finally end?" Karim Dafallah, Wimbledon

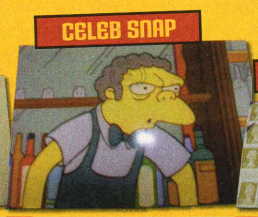
WORTHIEST CAUSE: ..... "This envelope is paid for by Nintendonitis suffers anonymous" James Vick, Kidderminster

DULLEST EMAIL TITLE: ..... Maxtor and Hammer Announce Major UK Disk Drive Distribution Agreement

BIGGEST STAMP

The size of a postcard no less!

CELEB SNAP



An actual *pic* of Moe. Do you know him, Leon Slater?

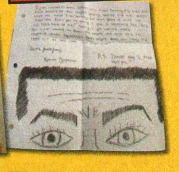
MOST STAMPS

Darren, 12 first class stamps is a bit much!

CUTEST CANINE

A puppy's for life, not just for Xmas.

BEST FLAT TOP HAIRSTYLE



SF2's Guile would be jealous.

WE LOVE GAMES

The bit of GM that's stuffed to bursting point with your mail

WE REALLY LOVE GAMES

Chatting with the people who've taken it all too far.

THIS MONTH: MARE SHEPPARD, 25, OF TORONTO, CANADA – AND A REAL LIFE KATAMARI

GM: What the-?
Mare: Once, long ago, I was introduced to a game called *Katamari Damacy*. I immediately fell in love with it.

GM: So you rolled up your own katamari?
Mare: Full of inspiration after re-playing the games for a few hours, my friend Lisa and I went shopping. We located two styrofoam balls in a craft store, and a ton of tiny objects at a dollar store [US Pound shop – Ed]

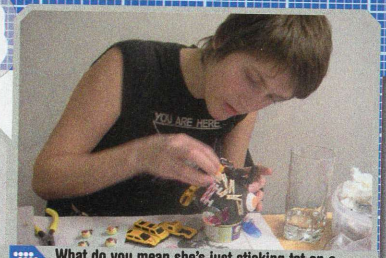
GM: What's the cost in time?
Mare: It took about five hours over the course of a few days, in several stages. First I cut the balls and then painted the katamari. Then I began the object onslaught and photographed it!

GM: And the cost?
Mare: About $20 (£11) – that's for the balls, ten dollars worth of tiny objects, poster paint and all the wires and pins.

GM: Further plans?
Mare: I'm actually a videogame designer/developer and half of Metanet Software (http://www.harveycartel.org/metanet) – we're hard at work on new games. Check out our free independent game, 'N'!

GM: But you're an artist, too?
Mare: Yep. Games like Katamari Damacy are so inspiring, because they're refreshingly different from most mainstream releases. So it's very likely that I'll do this sort of thing again...

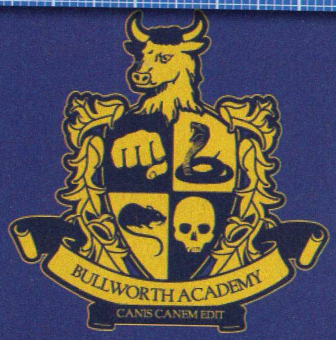
Eeek! A naked Katamari!



What do you mean she's just sticking tat on a ball? You say it like it was a bad thing.

REALLY LOVE GAMES?

Then this could be you! Spent long evenings turning your love of games into something 3D? Send us the pics and stuff to We♥Games, Gamesmaster, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Everyone featured gets a free game!



BULLY

BULLY FOR YOU

Dear *GM*,
I'm sick of Rockstar delaying their games. Take a look at *Bully* – it's not out till 2006. Grrr, to hell with the parent group in America! Rockstar don't listen to their complaints, they only make their games worse, so what the heck is the point of complaining about it?

Angry parents, if you don't like violent games don't let your kids play them. Meanwhile, let us responsible gamers judge for ourselves. Simple. *GTA* 4-EVER DUDES!!!

Daire O'Reilly, Ireland

life into the series. *Resident Evil 4* could be the start of something big. Very big. Nice one Capcom – bring on *Resi 5!*
Neil Spirit, email

And so say all of us!

DOGGY STYLE

Dear GM,
My dog Rocky is way better than any Nintendog! He's cute, cuddly and REAL! There's nothing like the soft feel of his fur, the constant wag of his tail and the way he can say *so* much with those pleading puppy dog eyes of his every time you try to eat a biscuit.

Digital dogs just can't compare to the actual feeling of knowing this cute bundle of fur that's looking at you with nothing but love in his eyes wouldn't hesitate for a second to give up his own life to protect yours.
Yes, *Nintendogs* might be a fun game to play, but it can never give you the same feeling as owning your own dog. It just can't compare.
Caroline Hing, County Tipperary

That lovely little tale brought a tear to our collective eye, Caroline, and little Rocky is undeniably gorgeous. But stop and think for a moment – what about all those unfortunate gamers unable to own a dog owing to allergies/harsh parents/space constraints/previous charges of animal cruelty? Nintendo isn't just releasing a mere game, it's bringing some much-needed doggy love to millions of lonely hearts all over the country. Or something like that. Have some compassion, Caroline.

TAKING THE DS

Hey *GM*,
Is it just me, or is anyone else getting sick and tired of half-arsed attempts at DS conversions? Take *FIFA 06* for example. We could have been flicking the ball around with the stylus... But no, all we get is a crappy GameCube downgrade with rubbish N64 graphics. Shame on EA and all other developers for not being bothered to make the most of the DS's unique abilities!
Owen Simpson, Hettering

Too true Owen. Luckily, for every hackneyed port like *Ridge Racer* or *Need for Speed* there's a delicious alternative like *Phoenix Wright* or *Mario Kart*. Keep the faith matey, keep the faith...

Media Muppets

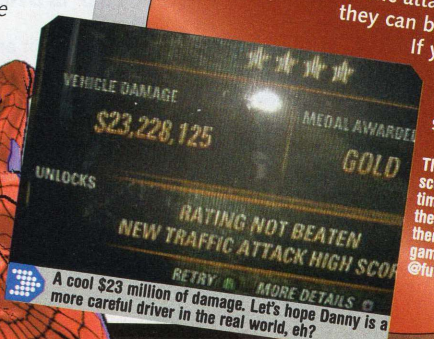
Dear *GamesMaster*,
Did you watch the BBC Money special on Xbox 360 recently? They started off by showing a prototype of the Xbox 360, but all too soon it descended into yet another slagging off of the games industry by the media. Showing footage of kids playing the new Xbox, they were saying things like "The object of the game is to kill everybody" and "The more I kill the better guns I get". The media always try to vilify gamers. From deep vein thrombosis from playing PS2 for 12 hours a day to the furore over *Bully*, they just

HI-SCORE CAM

My name's Danny Cooke, a.k.a Nitestrider in the gaming world. I was reading through your mag, and decided to have a pop at the *Burnout: Revenge* challenge. Here's a lil' shot for you – the picture shows my monster score on traffic attack. Does anyone reckon they can beat it?

If you've got a hi-score you want to shout about, take a digi-shot of the screen and send it to us.

This month we want your high scores from xxxxxxx any of your times or xxxxxx scores amaze, then take a digi-pic and then email them to gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk



A cool $23 million of damage. Let's hope Danny is a more careful driver in the real world, eh?

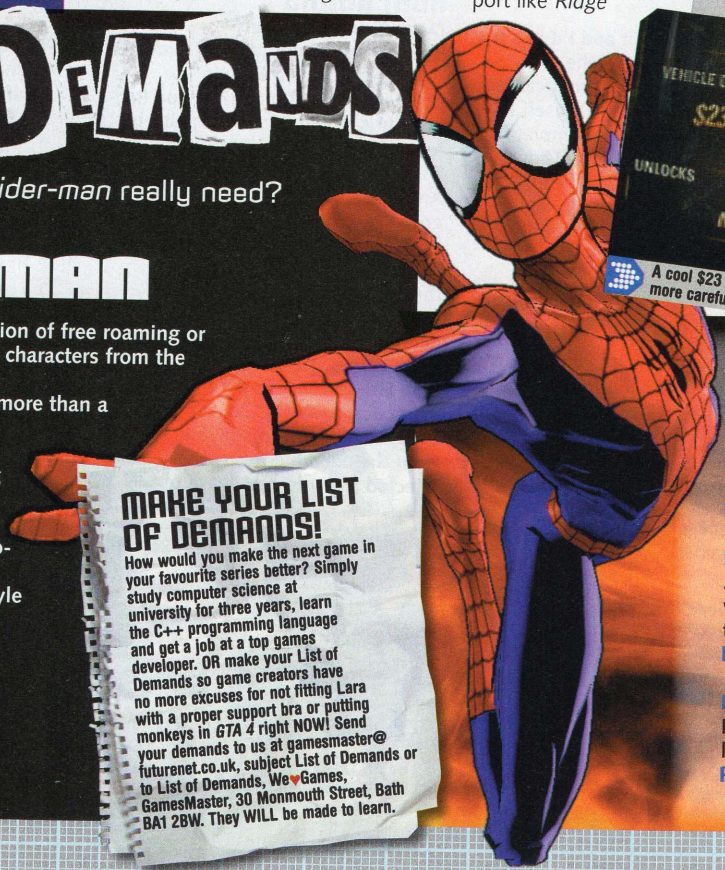
LIST OF DEMANDS

What does the next *Spider-man* really need? You tell us...

SPIDER-MAN

- Two-player mode with the option of free roaming or versus with a vast selection of characters from the *Spider-Man* universe.
- Longer Story mode that takes more than a single day to finish.
- Faster, more intuitive web swinging that means dropping through thin air for ages is a thing of the past.
- Integrate Eyetoy into the photo-taking bits.
- Romance Mary Jane in *GTA*-style subplots.
- Slooowww motion.

Stuart Price, North Yorkshire



MAKE YOUR LIST OF DEMANDS!

How would you make the next game in your favourite series better? Simply study computer science at university for three years, learn the C++ programming language and get a job at a top games developer. OR make your List of Demands so game creators have no more excuses for not fitting Lara with a proper support bra or putting monkeys in *GTA 4* right NOW! Send your demands to us at gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk, subject List of Demands or to List of Demands, We♥Games, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. They WILL be made to learn.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Hi *GM*,
I am inquiring whether you offer work experience at *GamesMaster*. If so, please could you tell me what I need to do e.g. send a letter or something? Thanks for your time.
Alex Dao, email

Dear *GamesMaster*,
As we are both quite interested in journalism, we would like to know if it is at all possible if we came to work at *GamesMaster* for a week...
Hannah Smith & Jeni Smart, email

Hi everyone at *GM*,
I really enjoy reading your magazine and I would love to be a games reviewer. How do I go about it?
Ashley J Searle

QUOTE FOR THE BOX:
"FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP... WHATEVER IT TAKES"

MY GAME IDEA

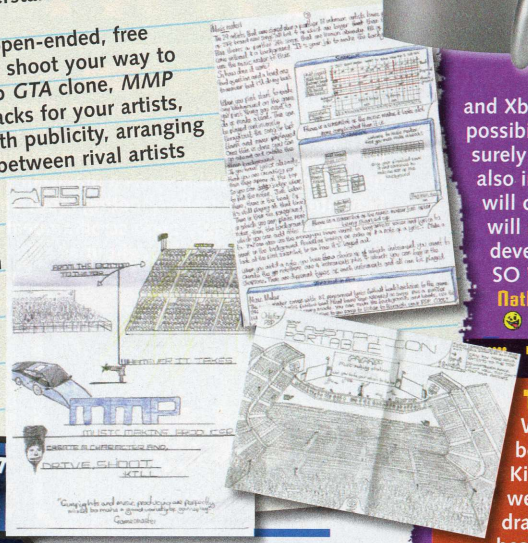
MMP: MUSIC MAKING PRODUCER

COPYRIGHT: NATHAN JACKSON, BOREHAMWOOD

WHAT IS IT: In charge of your own record label, you must 'discover' and sign up brilliant young hip hop and r'n'b artists. Work, maim and kill your way up from small time independent record label bod to Geffen-like status, managing superstars like Ja Rule and Jay Z.

HOW IT PLAYS: In an open-ended, free roaming city you must drive, rob, shoot your way to success. Much more than a cheap *GTA* clone, *MMP* also involves creating backing tracks for your artists, advertising their CDs, dealing with publicity, arranging concerts, while managing feuds between rival artists and some monster egos.

POTENTIAL BEST BIT: We always enjoy wanton murder, while keeping troublemakers like 50 Cent in check sounded like a laugh. The 'Create-an-Artist' option also looked ace.



JUDGEMENT

It could have been so derivative, but some wildly original ideas means *Music Making Producer* gets an MVP award from us.

X APPEAL

can't stop putting the boot in. What gives, *GM*?
James Vick, Kidderminster

Honestly Jim, we don't know. People are always scared of stuff they don't understand. Like foreigners, spiders, aliens and Katie Melua fans.

RIP MGS

Dear *GamesMaster*,
I was overjoyed when I heard rumours about a new *Metal Gear Solid* game. I even got up at 6am to buy your mag! Flicking to pages 12 and 13, my heart sank. *Metal Gear Solid*, my favourite series, my religion no less... was no more. I mean, Snake's getting frickin' old! He'll be dead by 2007!
Charlie Bolton, email

Even if Hideo Kojima has admitted *MGS4* is the last in the series he's likely to work on, it'd be madness for Konami to retire their iconic (and most lucrative) institution. Therefore, we predict you haven't seen the last of Solid Snake. And, hey, this one-eyed

Greetings *GM*,
I recently visited America and was lucky enough to have a go on *Call of Duty 2* on Xbox 360. One word: AMAZING. It really is like being in a war zone. Your comrades move like real people, and talk to each other like they've minds of their own. When your readers have played 360 they'll gawp at the screen. Next-gen can't come soon enough.
Jake Owens, Huddersfield

Having spent all month glued to our new Xboxes, we'd have to agree 360% with you, Jake. "Jerries to the left, over by that broken wall!" Oh no, here we go again...

Of the 360 titles we've played so far, *Call of Duty* has the biggest next-gen 'oomph' factor.

These are just some of the bundles of letters we receive at *GM* Towers each month from readers who want to sample the high life of international jetsetter, A-list celeb, gaming journo geniuses like ourselves. Ahem.
The good news is that, yes, we do occasionally take people on for work experience. Here's the checklist if you're hoping to apply:

- You'll have to be 17 or over. Company policy, we're afraid.
- You need to be able to uproot and come live in Bath, Somerset for at least a week.
- Life in the *GM* office isn't all playing games from dawn to dusk. You'll need to knuckle down and help with the *real* work too. And we don't mean just making Robin the occasional cup of tea.
- Sending in a sample of your work might be a good idea.

Editor Robin is one hard taskmaster, as poor Mark discovers to his misfortune. Again.

NEXT GEN NIGHTMARE

Hollywood actors, photo realistic graphics and huge development teams – PS3 and Xbox 360 present great new possibilities for gaming. But surely the price of gaming will also increase? The technology will cost more, the voiceovers will cost more and talented developers will cost more. AND SO WILL OUR GAMES! ARGH!
Nathan Jackson, Borehamwood

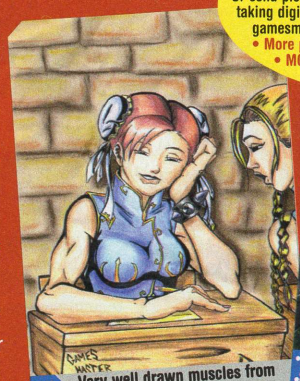
With the RRP for Microsoft Xbox 360 titles weighing in at a hefty £44.99, and third-party games being even more costly at £49.99, it looks as if you're spot on there Nathan. Ouch. Any miffed readers out there who simply can't afford/aren't prepared to put up with this next-gen pricing? Get

THINGS TO MAKE AND DO!

THIS MONTH'S TASK...

We've been chatting here at *GM* and we reckon the mag just hasn't been the same since Arthouse retired. So, we're bringing it back! Kind of. You see, instead of simply receiving your random scrawling, we're gong to set you a specific drawing task each month, and the best artists will have their works of art splashed all over We Love Games. To start you off, here's a violent one.
We want you to draw your dream videogame scraps. Sonic vs. Mario? Link vs. Cloud Strife? CJ vs. Tenpenny? Samus vs. Lara? Kratos vs. Dante? The more inventive/gorier the better please!

SEND IT IN!
Love games? Then write us a letter, draw some little hearts on it or something, and address it to GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Or send picture of your hi-scores and bizarre gaming moments taking digital camera shots and attaching them to emails sent to gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk What we want this month...
• More pictures/paintings/models/movies • More hi-scores
• MORE GAME IDEAS – SEND 'SCREENSHOTS' AND BOXART!


Very well drawn muscles from James Thornton of Dundalk.

Joshua Webster from Ripon knows how to make Samus come alive.

Pestering the jammiest jobsmiths in the games biz.

WE WANT YOUR JOB!

Gianni Zamo, lead xxxxx at the British Board of Film Classification 'BBFC'? "That's me." You play games and rate them for blood, nudes and swears? "I've been here since the first 18-rated game, which was *Dracula* in 1985." How did you land the job? "I was originally a prison probation officer. I'd always had an interest in film, and enjoyed games. So the BBFC took me on." Favourites? "I tend to prefer simulation and strategy, so *Rome: Total War* has proved horribly addictive. *Silent Hill* had an atmosphere all its own too – I thought *Resi* played more like a shoot-'em-up." Wait – how old are you? "I'm 48." You're officially the coolest 48-year-old ever. "I feel like I'm in Neverland: I'm permanently 13 years-old in this job."

HOW JAMMY IS THAT?
Classic film posters, Mario and giant chocolate!

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

01 The Big Red Books – "We still have an enormous pile of the big red A4 lined books that we used to use to note down all the rateable aspects of the games we get sent. 'Course, we've got laptops for that these days."

02 Steve McQueen – "A great big tribute to probably my favourite movie. I'm trying to dig my way out of the BBFC, but unlike Mr McQueen, I having got any books that I can use to hide the sand I'm digging out. Just kidding."

03 The games setup – "This keeps me quietly entertained. We have about four or five examiners rating each game, so we get the discs early – and often all the walkthroughs and cheats, because if we rate something it has to be the whole thing. We play, then write our report for the developer."

04 Cadbury's Dairy Milk – "Definitely keeps me going."

We ♥ Old Games

Snoop in *True Crime*, Fiddy in *50 Cent*... but jukebox met joypad years ago

With Mark Green from his caravan of retro game love.

Turnstiles and mics: *that's* rock and roll.

Steve Smith drums while the others wait at 'home'.

JOURNEY

(ARCADE, 1983)

Grandad might wiggle his fake hips as he recalls the seminal '70s rockers, Journey (*'Don't Stop Believin'*), but you won't. But with the band turned into sinister fuzzy-faced puppets made from less dots than a domino – and shooting aliens *with their instruments* – this is the band-to-game adaption that everyone can laugh at even today. In 20 years, perhaps we'll be looking back at an Xbox 360 game where James Blunt saves the Earth with his girly voice.

MOONWALKER (ARCADE, 1990)

If they can put a man on the moon, they can put a moonwalking man in a game. And they did, helping Michael prove that a) if he dances, everyone around drops dead and b) his pet monkey Bubbles was a magician with the power to turn him into a giant missile-shooting robot *all along*. *Moonwalker* was actually a surprisingly good scrolling beat-'em-up – but it's no surprise that it wasn't brought in as evidence at *that* trial.

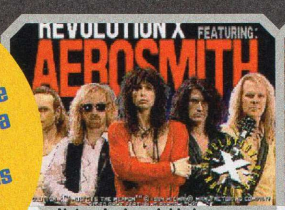
Michael Jackson's special dancing skills send the audience to sleep again.

The spooky mechanomichael says, "Come and give me a hug."

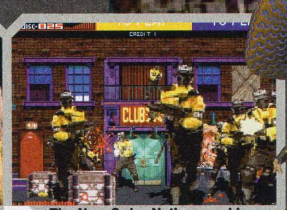
REVOLUTION X (ARCADE, 1996)

Taking music a little *too* literally, *Revolution X* built a whole game around one Aerosmith line. "Music is the weapon" were the words; a gun that spat CDs at enemies the interpretation. Regularly voted one of the worst games of all time, *Revolution X* was a battle to save youth culture from the oppressive New Order Nation and a race to rescue kidnapped members of Aerosmith itself. And they wondered why no-one played it?

RETRO KNOWLEDGE: An *NSync videogame came packaged with a fake phone that delivered messages from the boys



Not a single wrinkle has changed on Tyler in 11 years.



The New Order Nation was big on the banana-chic look.

Beautiful looking performers, aren't they? And Ginger Spice isn't even pictured.

SPICE WORLD

(PSONE, 1998)

This offered you 15 minutes of fun. First, remix Spice Girls tune into something approximating what happens if you drop your iPod in the bath. Get taught how to zig-a-zig-ah by a bloke with a comedy afro. Third, press buttons to make your Spice girl dance. So music *is* a weapon. Of immense hurt.

RETRO KNOWLEDGE: Tommy Lee's former band Mötley Crüe was turned into a pinball game, *Crüe Ball*

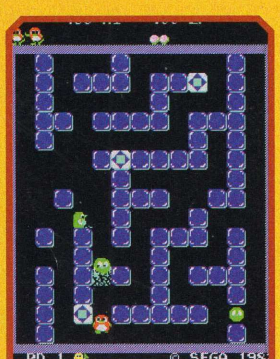
What we really, really want is to pretend this sorry mess never happened.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

PENGO

Pengo was a happy penguin cutie from the eponymous 1982 Sega coin-op. His special abilities included pushing ice blocks about to crush evil blobs and flaunting rare red and green plumage.

Now: Is going to stick out like a sore thumb in *March of the Penguins*.



Black and white and red (and green) all over.

YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE BORN!

This was the shiny future back then. Now it's just the past.

EXPANSION

See us roll our eyes in disbelief at Xbox 360's ability to play Girls Aloud tracks off keyrings and have its hard drive head taken off. The most exotic add-on in the '80s was a RAM Pack for £100 mini-computer, the ZX81. At 16k, it had 0.0000032 the storage space of an iPod, *and* a happy tendency to fall off the machine just as you finished loading a jerky 16k-only black-and-white version of *Pac-Man*. How we laughed.

FREE PLAY

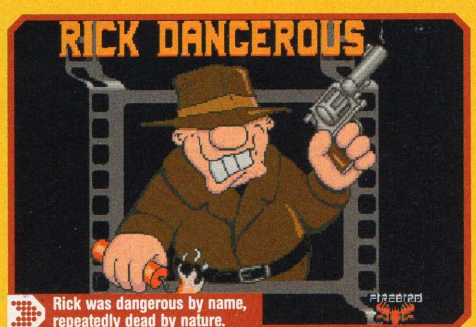
PLAY THE GAMES OF YESTERDAY

RICK DANGEROUS

Originally released: 1989

Why you must play it: Rick conquered the platform genre just before his creators thunk up a new cave-exploring hero in Lara Croft.

How to get it: Fiercely loyal remake available at http://www.rickdangerous.info/



Rick was dangerous by name, repeatedly dead by nature.

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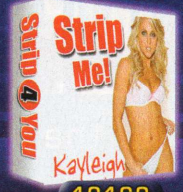

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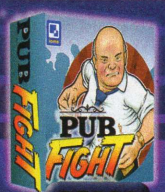

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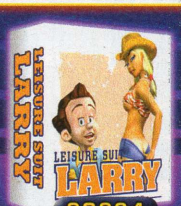

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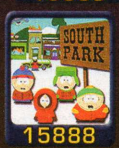

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22736	23768	50 CENT	Outta control
23918	23767	BLACK EYED PEAS	My Humps
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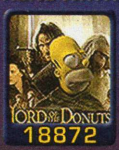

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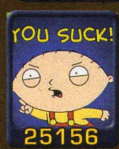

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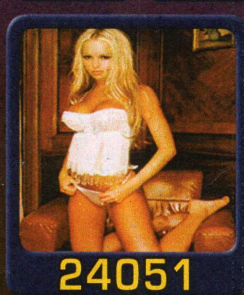
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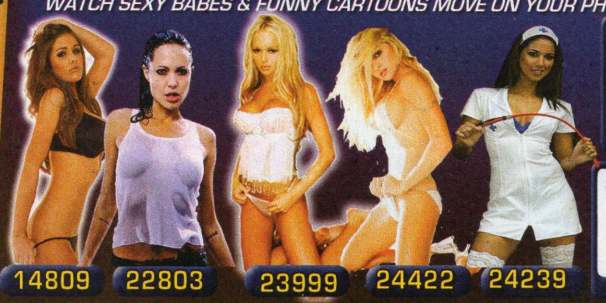
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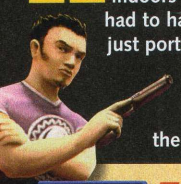
GamesMaster's

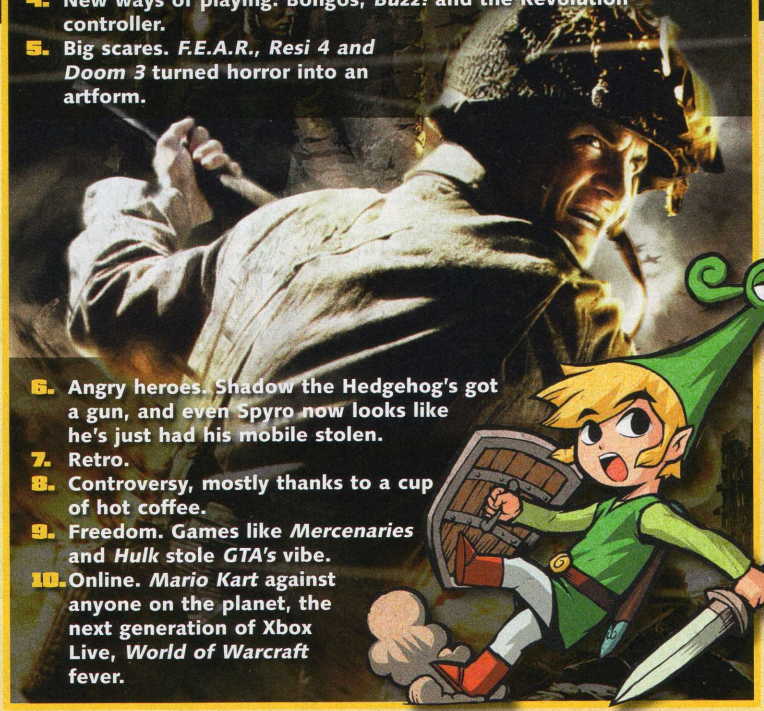
50 gaming gems that brightened up the last 12 months...

As we say goodbye to another year, it's good to reflect on what 2005 has offered us in terms of virtual adventure. So here are the games that have stirred our passion and kept us company in the cold winter nights and indoors on the balmy summer ones. The games we considered for the list had to have come out in the UK in 2005, and had to be new releases, not just ports, (so *GTA: San Andreas* for the Xbox doesn't count). We've argued long and hard about what made the final list, and in what order they made (and some of us still won't let it lie), so feel free to join in the whining and let us know what you think should have made the final cut in our Reader Awards (p.12). Here's the big 50...



WHAT WAS BIG IN 2005

1. **World War 2. Again.**
2. **Rappers in games: 50 Cent, Snoop Dogg. Vanilla Ice can't be too far behind.**
3. **Ultra-violence. Please see: *God of War's* rivers, fountains and streams of blood.**
4. **New ways of playing: Bongos, *Buzz!* and the Revolution controller.**
5. **Big scares. *F.E.A.R.*, *Resi 4* and *Doom 3* turned horror into an artform.**



6. **Angry heroes. Shadow the Hedgehog's got a gun, and even Spyro now looks like he's just had his mobile stolen.**
7. **Retro.**
8. **Controversy, mostly thanks to a cup of hot coffee.**
9. **Freedom. Games like *Mercenaries* and *Hulk* stole *GTA's* vibe.**
10. **Online. *Mario Kart* against anyone on the planet, the next generation of Xbox Live, *World of Warcraft* fever.**

50 TOTAL OVERDOSE

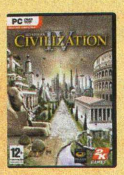
PS2 XBOX

FROM: SCi

What is it?: Insane *GTA*-insanity set in a Mexican town.

End of year verdict: Cartwheeling off walls, diving in slow motion and midgets in sombreros are just three of the great things on offer here. Could only get more in your face by smashing your mouth with a frying pan.

BEST BIT: Sombrero stealing! Bagging a collection of hats bigger than Royal Ascot's is heady stuff.



48 CIVILIZATION 4

PC

FROM: Firaxis

WHAT IS IT?: Latest version of Sid Meier's simulation of international argy-bargying.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Still playing catchup with *Rome: Total War*, *Civ* still remains a gripping strategy fest. The new 'Flexible Tech Tree' lets you evolve mighty civilisations your way.

BEST BIT: Pitting the Greeks against 18th Century US riflemen? Makes historians foam at the mouth, that.

47 TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT

PS2 XBOX CUBE

FROM: Free Radical

WHAT IS IT?: Stylish package of bullets and death – and time paradoxes that would perplex Stephen Hawking.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Other shooters act all tough and serious; *TimeSplitters* sings 'Omelettes!' while riding a unicycle. Slick action, tons to do (including making maps), and monkeys.

BEST BIT: The Behead the Undead challenges – meat really is murder when walking cow carcasses go for your throat.

49 PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

PS2 XBOX CUBE

FROM: Crystal Dynamics

WHAT IS IT?: Semi-sequel to *Deus Ex* that favours bullets over brainplay.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: There's 'snow' question (see?) this is one of the year's most charged console blasters. Precise controls: good. Shotguns that double up as shrapnel cannons: gooder.

BEST BIT: Using the icepick to burrow electronic tendrils into security drones and make them fail faster than *Windows XP*.

46 PSYCHONAUTS

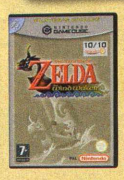
PS2 XBOX

FROM: Double Fine

WHAT IS IT?: Blindingly inventive platforming from the brains behind *Monkey Island*.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Psychic platforming perfection, with hero Rez using the power of the mind to set fire to scenery and throw boxes about. Drenched in ideas, and a laugh riot.

BEST BIT: Levels the size of Droitwich, with more hidden stuff than even Mario could cope with.



45 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES

CUBE

FROM: Nintendo

WHAT IS IT?: Retro-esque *Zelda* fourplay, best with GBAs plugged in, and some mates.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: *Four Swords* will suck your wallet dry – thanks to all that GC-GBA connectivity nonsense – but it's worth it. Multi-player to make you love and hate your mates in equal doses.

BEST BIT: Arrows fly out of the GBA screen and onto your telly. Neat.

44 ODDWORLD: STRANGER'S WRATH

XBOX

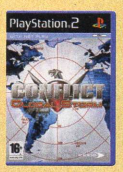
FROM: Oddworld Inhabitants

WHAT IS IT?: First-person and third-person bunged together for wild west adventuring.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: With a look all its own and drowning in humour, *Stranger's Wrath* is one of 2005's most

TOP 50 2005

gratifyingly bizarre adventures. Don't be a stranger, hunt it down.
BEST BIT: Hunting for live ammo that really is alive – Stranger uses chipmunks and insects as ammunition in firefights.



43 CONFLICT: GLOBAL TERROR

PS2 XBOX PC

FROM: Pivotal
WHAT IS IT?: Tactical gun aggressiveness, set *very slightly* into the future.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: After the horror of *Vietnam's* crapness, the *Conflict* series finds its way again. The autoaim's been kicked out for smarter play, and it's terrorists on the other end of your gun.
BEST BIT: Co-operative conflicts for up to four players who can help shoulder the burden of rescuing the free world from gits.

42 FREEDOM FORCE VS THE THIRD REICH

PC

FROM: Irrational
WHAT IS IT?: Time-travelling superhero sequel to tongue-in-cheek spandex-a-thon.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: A heroic mix of RPG, action and strategy, with superheroes so stereotypical they carry around shields with the US flag on. An interactive comic book – complete with laughs.
BEST BIT: Visually, it's a cartoon come to life – and the superpowers make the X-Men look like Westlife.

41 FORZA MOTOSPORT

XBOX

FROM: Microsoft
WHAT IS IT?: Serious-minded racer with an emphasis on pimping your ride. With stickers.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Far from the *Gran Turismo* killer we were expecting, *Forza's* still a tarmac-chewing thrill ride of fast fun and serious sim. Tracks are a bit drab, mind.
BEST BIT: Playing chicken with corners by taking them waaay too fast. Then crashing.

40 BAITEN KAITOS: ETERNAL WINGS

CUBE

FROM: Monolith Soft
WHAT IS IT?: Traditional RPG where you pack cards instead of fists.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: This two-disc adventure deals you out a treat – a quest beautiful enough to make your eyes sparkle, and special card-combining combat. Over 1000 bits of cardboard to collect!
BEST BIT: Food goes bad in your pockets – it's inedible, but you bung it at enemies to poison them with mouldiness.

39 GUILD WARS

PC

FROM: Arenanet
WHAT IS IT?: Fighty online RPG with local disputes rather than full-on world wars.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: *Guild Wars* judges your level based on skill rather than weeks spent thumping an axe into a tree – and superb player-vs-player combat makes you new enemies the planet over.
BEST BIT: A complete lack of monthly subscription fees. Hear those wallets sing.

38 F.E.A.R.

PC

FROM: Monolith
WHAT IS IT?: Slomo-drenched FPS with a splash of survival horror scariness.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: More than lives up to its name, thanks to the unnerving girl-child giving you the scares throughout. *F.E.A.R.* marries fighting moves with pistol-play, and sprays blood like a broken blood-pipe.
BEST BIT: Guards are smart enough to run for their lives if they sense a lost cause. Come back, you wimps!

37 FAR CRY INSTINCTS

XBOX PC

FROM: Crytek/Ubisoft Montreal
WHAT IS IT?: PC mid-jungle safari shooter, remixed for the Xbox.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: With Stephen Dorf's growls, the sun's happy rays, and an island with more secrets than the one in *Lost*, *Instincts* is the thinking person's gun marathon.
BEST BIT: Everything – the fortresses, the MENSA-member enemies, and explosions to make your peepers go pop.

36 MERCENARIES

PS2 XBOX

FROM: Pandemic Studios
WHAT IS IT?: Free-roaming battler with more explosion than a blaze at a TNT factory.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Nicks *GTA's* vehicle-jacking idea and forcibly inserts it into full-scale battles of technology. Choppers, rocket launchers, and buildings that crumble like rhubarb. Mmm.
BEST BIT: Emptying your life savings on a Bunker Buster and bringing an entire skyscraper to its knees.

35 STAR WARS KOTOR 2: THE SITH LORDS

XBOX PC

FROM: Obsidian
WHAT IS IT?: Another round of role-playing and scrapping in the universe of Lucasart's chief beard.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Proving *Star Wars* is only really safe in the hands of people with necks, *KOTOR2* thrills with it's slicey lightstick battles – even if it makes you fight with rocks for three long hours.
BEST BIT: Lucas's coloured striplights look the business, helping the RPG-ish battles throb with Force power.

34 SNAKES

NGAGE

FROM: Nokia
WHAT IS IT?: It's the mobile game even your mum's played – but modernised so she doesn't know what's going on anymore.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: The everyman of handheld gaming gets ssslicker, with twisting pathways to slither through and 3D *Tron*-style looks to attract admiring glances in the dentist's waiting room.
BEST BIT: Managing to squeeze through the walls and watch the score go mathemental.

33 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006

PS2 XBOX PSP

FROM: EA
WHAT IS IT?: It's a bit like playing snooker on grass, but with just one ball and a big field instead of a table.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Goodbye Tiger Vision, hello adding 'shape' to your shot using the analogue stick – and the happy return of the putting grid. This Tiger's deadlier than ever.
BEST BIT: Watching the celebratory animation on John Daly – his podgy tum actually jiggles. Bless.

TOP 5s

Robin
Editor

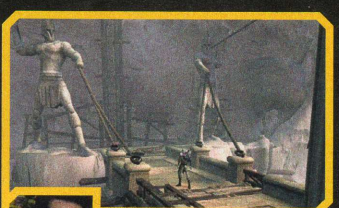
1. Resident Evil 4
2. Advance Wars DS
3. Perfect Dark Zero
4. The Warriors
5. God of War

RESIDENT EVIL 4: And there we were thinking this would just be another *Resi* game. *Resi 4* really gives something back to the fans: from start to finish, this is a game dedicated to *fun*. And fear.

Kath
Reviews Editor

1. Resident Evil 4
2. Splinter Cell Chaos Theory
3. Fahrenheit
4. Nintendogs
5. Meteos

NINTENDOGS: You may be bored of it within a month, but it's a fun-packed month where you're left proud as punch when your puppy wins the obedience class three times in a row.



Rob
Writer

1. God of War
2. Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
3. The Warriors
4. Call of Duty 2
5. Meteos

GOD OF WAR: The Greek mythology, the gods, the monsters. Anti-hero Kratos is my new gaming icon. This is a guy so hard he's been scarred white by the ashes of his dead family! Respect.

32 CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW

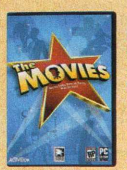
DS

FROM: Konami
WHAT IS IT?: Long-running vampire-baiting classic hits the double screens in style.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Using the touch screen to draw 'dark seals' is hardly write-home stuff, but the DS still gets a 2D adventure dripping with quality – and blood. Not to mention a big skull on legs.
BEST BIT: The new bosses. Until you've died at the hands of a giant green ogre, you haven't lived.

31 KIRBY POWER PAINTBALL

DS

FROM: Nintendo
WHAT IS IT?: The Kirbster gets wound up and let loose on a crazy-paced rollercoaster ride.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Painting rainbow roads is still one of the best uses of the DS stylus (aside from scratching that hard-to-reach back itch). A masterpiece of 2D gaming glory.
BEST BIT: Doing what Kirby does best – scoffing enemies and stealing their powers.



30 THE MOVIES

PC

From: Activision
What is it: Peter Molyneux's movie studio management sim that lets you make your own films.
End of year Verdict: Not a complete success – once again Molyneux has bitten off more than he chew – but at least he's got a healthy appetite. And a head like a potato.
BEST BIT: Seeing your movie come to life onscreen with your own script, direction and voice overs.

29 METEOS

DS

FROM: Q Entertainment
WHAT IS IT?: It's your standard blocks-falling-down-the-screen puzzle game – with blocks flying off the top of the screen, too.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Perfect for the DS, as dragging blocks with the plastic pen is just the right side of brain-breaking. And, according to the plot, you're saving the world from ending as you do it.
BEST BIT: Jettisoning a gigantic column of blocks to smash the hopes and dreams of your opponent.

28 PATHWAY TO GLORY/ IKUSA ISLANDS

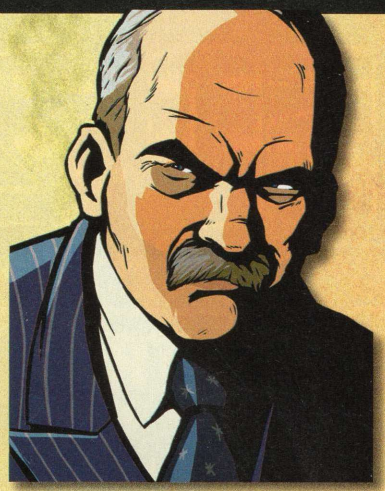
NGAGE

FROM: Redlynx
WHAT IS IT?: Turn-based WW2 – the N-Gage's own *Advance Wars*.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: The N-Gage flaunts its power for once – just look at those visuals! The twin *Ikusa Islands* games bring European and Pacific warfare to your hands in giddying style.
BEST BIT: Two tanks facing off in glorious N-Gage-o-vision. You've never seen metal treated so badly.

27 GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

PSP

FROM: Rockstar
WHAT IS IT?: Essentially *GTA3* expertly scrunched down to trouser-cramming dimensions.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: A technical achievement to rival two-minute microwave chips – *Liberty City* in its entirety, plus bits and pieces from later games (bikes, aiming). *The* must-own PSP title.
BEST BIT: Finally unlocking



Shoreside Vale and stretching your wheels in the wild(ish) west of the map.

26 RIDGE RACERS

PSP

FROM: Namco
WHAT IS IT?: A 'Best of *Ridge Racer* for PSP, mixing the series' tracks and tunes up mad-style.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Play it 20 minutes at a time, and *Ridge Racers* is a blinding celebration of a consistently brilliant race 'em up, with more power sliding than an iced-up Tesco trolley park.
BEST BIT: New Ridge City – the night-time streetrace is the stuff of dreams on the PSP's crisptacular screen.

25 BURNOUT LEGENDS

PSP

FROM: Criterion
WHAT IS IT?: A 'best of' collection of tracks and ideas from the speed-soaked stunner.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Crashed-up mash-up that brings *Takedown's* mental play to old *Burnout* tracks. 100 Crash junctions, 75 race events, 89 vehicles – truly legendary.
BEST BIT: Crash mode – explosive, satisfyingly simple, and lots of 'Who--a! Noo... ye-yea... YESSS!' moments.

24 NINTENDOGS

DS

FROM: Nintendo
WHAT IS IT?: Tamagotchi taken to its next natural step; it's a dog in a box.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Animated so beautifully that even the hardest heart will melt, *Nintendogs* hooks onto you like a furry watery-eyed parasite.
BEST BIT: Having two puppies and watching them share the same bowl of food. It's ok to weep.

23 BLACK & WHITE 2

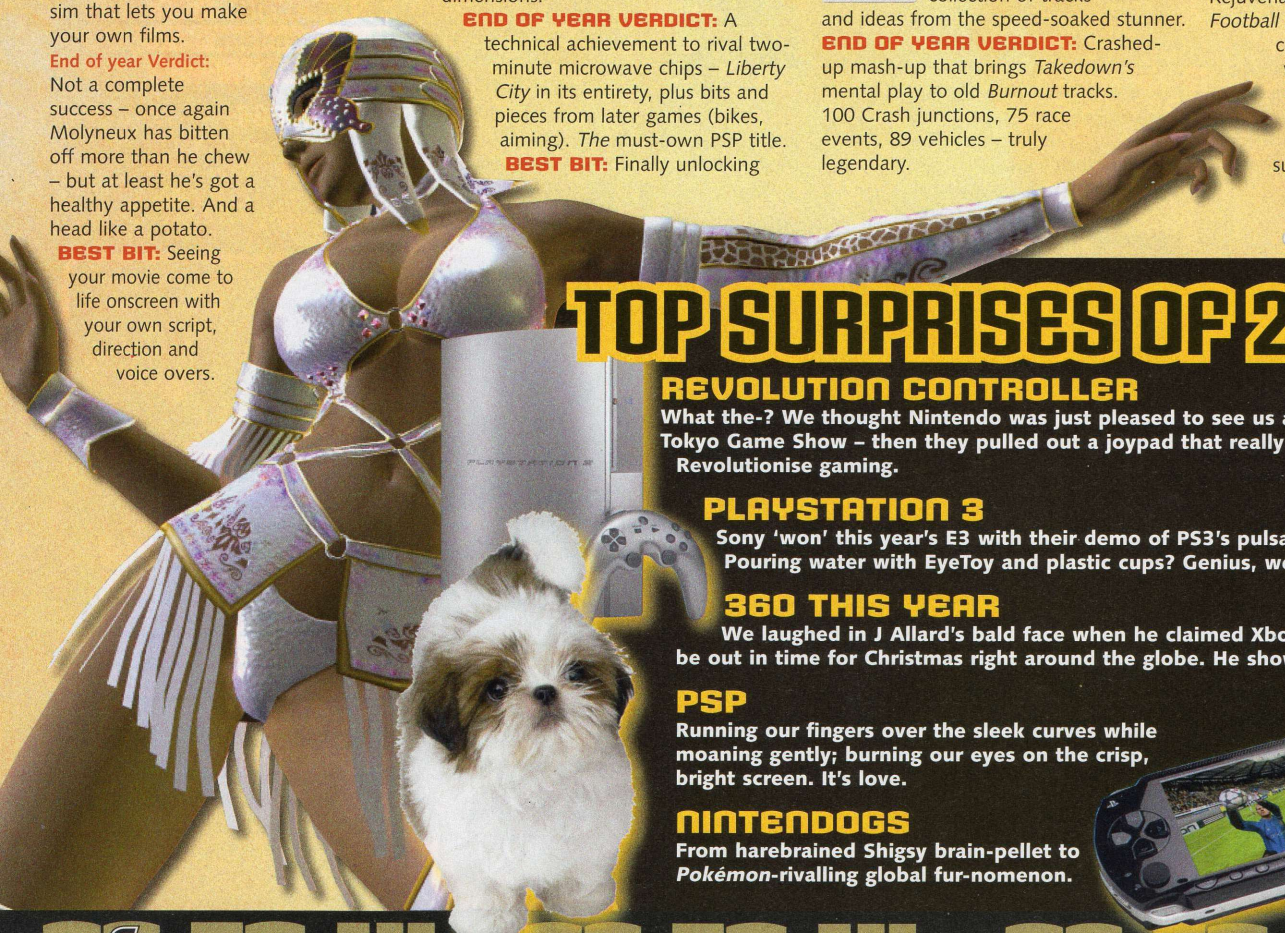
PC

FROM: Lionhead
WHAT IS IT?: God game sequel that's best described as *Sim City* meets *Total War*.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: A bit like *Nintendogs* for people who'd rather have a skyscraper-sized cow god than a baby Shitzu – and the sequel has lashings more war than the original for added tacticity.
BEST BIT: Unleashing fiery volcano hell on your poor villagers, just because *you can*.

22 FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006

XBOX PC PSP 360

FROM: Sports Interactive
WHAT IS IT?: Latest edition of the management sim that stole *Championship Manager's* crown.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Rejuvenated rather than reinvented, *Football Manager* remains the sim of choice for wannabe Sir Alexes, with half-time team talks and simplified training thrown in this year.
BEST BIT: The player summary screen has enough



TOP SURPRISES OF 2005

REVOLUTION CONTROLLER

What the-? We thought Nintendo was just pleased to see us at the Tokyo Game Show – then they pulled out a joypad that really will Revolutionise gaming.

PLAYSTATION 3

Sony 'won' this year's E3 with their demo of PS3's pulsating power. Pouring water with EyeToy and plastic cups? Genius, we tells ya.

360 THIS YEAR

We laughed in J Allard's bald face when he claimed Xbox 360 would be out in time for Christmas right around the globe. He showed us.

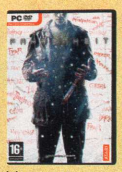
PSP

Running our fingers over the sleek curves while moaning gently; burning our eyes on the crisp, bright screen. It's love.

NINTENDOGS

From harebrained Shigsy brain-pellet to *Pokémon*-rivalling global fur-nomenon.

numbers to make Carol Vorderman throw up.



21 FAHRENHEIT

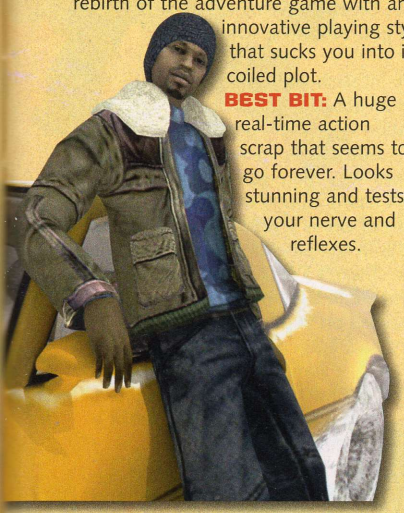
PS2 XBOX PC

FROM: Atari

WHAT IS IT: Noir-esque, mind manglingly, *Matrix*-like action game with touches of the interactive-movie in it.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Unlike anything you'll play this year – it's a rebirth of the adventure game with an innovative playing style that sucks you into its coiled plot.

BEST BIT: A huge real-time action scrap that seems to go forever. Looks stunning and tests your nerve and reflexes.



20 ASTRO BOY

GBA

FROM: Treasure/Sega

WHAT IS IT: Colourful shooter on feet based on Osamu Tezuka's loveable shiny-barneted anime tot.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Another instant hit from the *Ikaruga* people, *Astro Boy* shows that even a 50-year-old comic legend can kick ass – and bring stellar shooting to GBA.

BEST BIT: The full-on *Astro Boy* beam – half a screenful of enemy-incinerating blue and white death.

19 TEKKEN 5

PS2

FROM: Namco

WHAT IS IT: Return to form for fighting humans, bears and muscly leopard heads.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Despite the lack of online, *Tekken 5's* back-to-basics approach papers over memories of Tag Tournament – and comes complete with Wesley Snipes lookalike.

BEST BIT: A toss-up between the beautiful and revealingly-trousered combatant Christie – or that giant fighting bear.

18 TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND

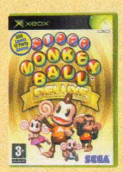
DS

FROM: Activision

WHAT IS IT?: Tony Hawk getting a fresh look and a few new twists which manage to conjure up the old magic.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: A superb example of how existing games can be tweaked to suit the unique attributes of the DS. It manages to enhance the experience without becoming too gimmicky.

BEST BIT: Being able to customise the experience using the stylus to sketch deck designs and the in-bujlt microphone to record your own cries of pain.



17 SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE

PS2 XBOX

FROM: Sega

WHAT IS IT?: *SMB* and its sequel crammed into one game like... well, a monkey in a ball.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Strange to think *Monkey Ball* was born in arcades – it's the perfect teeth-gnashing reaction test for the home. Mini-games like Targeting, Fighting and Tennis really do 'own'.

BEST BIT: Managing to roll your way around that killer course without going all flying monkey. 'Aiiiii!'

16 NINJA GAIDEN BLACK

XBOX

FROM: Tecmo

WHAT IS IT?: The definitive *Ninja Gaiden* pack – including all the add-on Hurricane Packs.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: More than just an update, *Ninja Gaiden Black* throws in tons of new stuff: including an easy Ninja Dog difficulty for those of us left as hollowed-out shells by the original *Gaiden*.

BEST BIT: Managing to finish the bloody thing.

15 BATTLEFIELD 2

PS2 XBOX CUBE PC

FROM: Vice

WHAT IS IT?: *Battlefield 1942* follow-up – a team-focused super-war extreme, best played online.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: A hierarchy of command means orders trickle down from uberpowerful players – this is as close as you get to that real war feeling without buying a balloon ride into Iraq.

BEST BIT: Wearing a big tank and rolling into war as part of a well-oiled co-operative squad. Endearing.

14 MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

PS2 XBOX

FROM: Rockstar

WHAT IS IT?: *Need for Speed*-trouncing car chase with a licence from US car mag, *Dub*.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: All the cars and customisation and crashes you could ask for – complete with cop chasing, an actual rollercoaster ride, and as many 180mph collisions with walls as you fancy.

BEST BIT: Racing side by side with a San Diego police car, then tilting the stick to nudge him off a bridge. Cop that!

TOP 5s

Mark

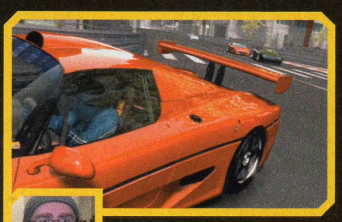
1. Resident Evil 4
2. Doukutsu Monogatari
3. Perfect Dark Zero
4. God of War
5. Taito Legends

DOUKUTSU MONOGATARI: This is a heart-breakingly cute platform-shooter from Studio Pixel – it's *absolutely free* (www.gameflaws.com/cavestory), and puts paid-for games to shame.

Dave

1. Resident Evil 4
2. Pro Evolution Soccer 5
3. Gametrak: Real World Golf
4. Sniper Elite
5. God of War

SNIPER ELITE: Sniping isn't the healthiest of interests, but this curious take on the WW2 shooter will make many campers very happy.



Steve

1. Project Gotham 3
2. Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath
3. God of War
4. Forza Motorsport
5. Makai Kingdom: Chronicle of the Sacred Tome

PGR3: A lasting invasion of my spare time. Christmas is pretty much cancelled this year, unless Santa can bring me those last Platinum Medals.

13 SOUL-CALIBUR 3

PS2 XBOX

FROM: Namco

WHAT IS IT?: Packed and gorgeous threequel in the champion series of weapon-edged knockabouts.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Unlike *SoulCalibur 2*, edition three is hard as the rock. Even on Normal, you'll be handed your ass on a special gilded plate with "You suck!" written around the edge. Flawless fighting.

BEST BIT: Cervantes the pirate's imposing pistol-sword makes enemies say, "Yarrrgh!"

12 CALL OF DUTY 2

PC 360

FROM: Infinity Ward

WHAT IS IT?: Spectacul-o-sequel to the finest WW2 experience money can buy.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: There's never been a more immersive WW2 game – smoke is used to stunning effect, and the yells and screams of your colleagues make you more nervous than a cat on Nov 5th.

BEST BIT: Scampering up the machinegun-laden Hill 400 under cover of a real pea-souper.

11 MARIO KART DS

DS

FROM: Nintendo

WHAT IS IT?: The double-screened kart-racer that DS owners have been waiting for.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: WiFi aside, there's nothing here to drag kart racing into the future – but it's *Mario Kart* on DS, and that's all that matters. Includes classic tracks from old *Mario Karts*, so old people smile.

BEST BIT: Unlocking age-old Nintendo embarrassment ROB the Robot.

10 SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

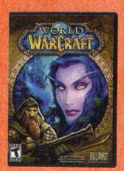
PS2 XBOX CUBE PC NGAGE DS

FROM: Ubisoft

WHAT IS IT?: Third in the series of games starring a man wearing triple traffic lights set to green.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: With the alarm system given a brilliant twist – your objectives are cancelled one by one as the sirens wail, until you're pulled out entirely by your miffed boss – *Splinter Cell* has managed to sneak back to its former glory. The desire to get Sam "Bwight lights!" Fisher through the dark without raising a single panicked cry from a guard is stronger than ever. Then there's the Inverted Chokehold. Nasty, that.

BEST BIT: It's got to be the Cooperative mode – complete with a mind-meddling crossover moment with single-player Sam.



9 WORLD OF WARCRAFT

PC

FROM: Blizzard

WHAT IS IT?: Globe-conquering RPG of fantasy brilliance, played online by thousands.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: A full year's access to *World of Warcraft* costs almost as much as a TV licence. But we know people who've given up TV – and food, and sleep – to join the tens of thousands traipsing around the vast world inside Blizzard's servers. Exploring is half the fun, but the expertly-balanced combat – where you have to team up with people sitting elsewhere on Earth to defeat the more dastardly dungeons – works for both newcomers and experts.

BEST BIT: Setting off to explore new areas – and finding them full of creatures you can smack in the chops.

8 GRAN TURISMO 4

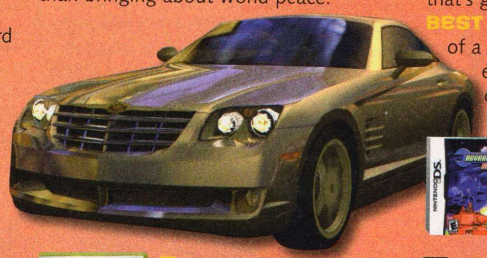
PS2

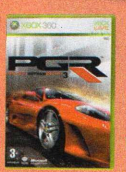
FROM: Polyphony Digital

WHAT IS IT?: Racing made more realistic than ever – nearly 700 cars makes it that bit smaller than 50 Cent's garage.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: *Project Gotham* is dragging racers screaming into the next generation, but *GT4's* host of improvements and sheer look and feel helps it drop our jaw nicely. Cars from the Model T to the made-up Nike 2200 invite you into their plush insides – and the replays are now officially indistinguishable from real life to our goggling eyes. And get this – you're just moving forward and flicking left and right on the stick!

BEST BIT: Finally finishing off one of the licence tests. Only slightly less tricky than bringing about world peace.





7 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

360

FROM: Bizarre Creations

WHAT IS IT?: From Dreamcast, to Xbox and now to 360 – the third generation of inexplicably-named ravishing race-'em-upping.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: We knew it was going to be good. But *this* good? Clearly, *Gotham 3* looks stunning. The soft curves of the cars and the reflections on city building windows are visual poetry – and that's *real* cities, mind you, with London, New York and Tokyo rebuilt inside your telly. But it's the feel of *PGR3* that's the clincher: E-braking around corners and racing at speeds to make *Burnout* blush... plus, you can take the whole thing online.

BEST BIT: Getting first place on 'Hardcore' mode, where all the other drivers hate you and everything you stand for.

6 GOD OF WAR

PS2

FROM: Sony

WHAT IS IT? Short but oh-so-sweet Greek mythological epic with god-bothering anti-hero.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Hack 'n' slash with more blood than an abbatoir, and a short vacation in the fiery depths of hell – *God of War* makes you wonder why more games aren't based around the epic myths of Greek legend. Claret-drenched battles in stunning locations are expertly done. *Tekken 5*-topping visuals in a game where entire legions of the undead are unleashed on your enemies? By Hades, that's god. Er, good.

BEST BIT: Jumping onto the scaly head of a giant dragon before pulling its eyes out with your nasty-looking chain sword. Have it!

5 ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE

DS

FROM: Intelligent Systems

WHAT IS IT?: Nintendo's magnificent Games Workshop-style wargaming does the double-screen dance.

END OF YEAR VERDICT: Put the stylus down – this is best controlled with good old-fashioned fingers. Like all *Advance Wars* titles, *Dual Strike* transforms boring old turn-based strategy into something completely irresistible – and utterly Nintendo. There's so much challenge

THE LET DOWNS OF 2005

ZELDA DELAYED TO 2006

No *Zelda*-shaped packages under the Christmas tree this year. Nintendo: sellotape Shigsy's hands to his keyboard until he's done.

CONSOLE SHORTAGES

You'll have to have been queueing outside Dixons since February 1975 if you want to get hold of a 360 or PSP for the 25th.

YOSHI'S UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION

It seems Nintendo's head brains can malfunction after all. *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation* SPECIALd some half-hearted tilt controls and barely anything to do. In Yoshi's words: "Fw-fwn."

SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

Sega decided it was bullet time for the *Sonic* series. We crossed our fingers and hoped it would actually work. It didn't.

KING KONG

An ambitious attempt to do something new and exciting with a colossal movie licence. Shame they forgot to put the game in.

FIVE THINGS YOU MUST DO BEFORE 2006

CHECKED OUT ASHLEY

RESIDENT EVIL 4
Look up Ashley's skirt with the C-stick and she'll call you a pervert. That's getting off lightly given you've just ogled the US President's daughter.

WORN SONIC'S HEAD

PROJECT RUB
Start the game with *Sonic Advance* or its sequel in the GBA slot, and you'll unlock a Sonic wig for endless thigh-slapping hilarity.

CHICKENED OUT

GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES
What are you, chicken? Yes, if you complete *Liberty City Stories'* SlashTV mission three times: it unlocks the Cluckin' Bell outfit.

PARTIED STAR WARS STYLE

LEGO STAR WARS
In 'Discovery on Kamino', use the Force on the speakers to begin a *DDR*-style mini-game – which will trigger a krazy Kamino disco.

THROWN FOOD AT MEN

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER
After the torture scene, chuck the food back at the guard three times and you'll be forced to listen to him witter on about his family.

here, you'll be building an extension on your skull to make room for brain growth. And with WiFi multi-player on tap, this is clearly the best *Advance Wars* ever. And the best DS game full stop. *And* just brilliant.
BEST BIT: Unleashing ground-rockingly powerful tag-team moves. Say, "Raaargh!" as you do so.

4 METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

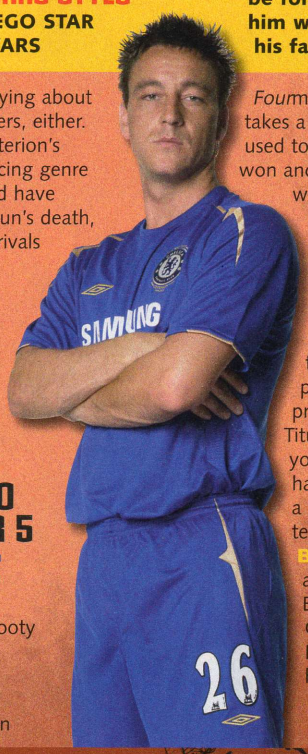
PS2
FROM: Konami
WHAT IS IT?: Tactical espionage action goes back in time to explain where Big Boss and Metal Gear came from.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: After the philosophical ear-bashing we got from *MGS2*, it's a relief to see series nutcase Hideo Kojima back on track with a game that's much more than just *I'm Solid Snake: Get Me Out Of Here*. The bosses are staggering, the camo idea superb, the 1964-era gadgets a great touch (sonar instead of radar; silencers that fail), and it's laced with a wicked sense of humour – yes, you really *do* get to track the monkeys from *Ape Escape*.
BEST BIT: What we believe is referred to as 'hauling ass' on a motorbike.

3 BURNOUT REVENGE

PS2 XBOX
FROM: Criterion
WHAT IS IT?: 'Battle Racing Ignited', they call it. The fourth, fastest ever *Burnout*, ever.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Smashing other cars out of the way, steering your flying wreckage into rivals – and the title isn't lying about getting *Revenge* on other drivers, either. This fourth racer continues Criterion's crash-soaked assault on the racing genre – *every* racer feels like it should have explosions the size of a small sun's death, and cars that somersault over rivals and into the path of a passing bus. The word 'thrilling' was invented for this.
BEST BIT: Getting taken down at a corner – then using the Crashbreaker to take everyone else down with you.

2 PRO EVO SOCCER 5

PS2 XBOX PC PSP
FROM: Konami
WHAT IS IT?: *FIFA*-smacking footy franchise takes a turn for the realistic.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: Bravely fiddling with the golden *Foumula*, *Pro Evo 5* takes a bit of getting used to – matches are won and lost in midfield, where the amount of argy-bargy makes proceedings closer to *Call of Duty*. But if it's endlessly rewarding football you're after, with the satisfaction of playing like a real pro (not counting Titus Bramble), this is your man. Konami has even signed up a handful of official teams.
BEST BIT: Gazing at the majesty of Bayern Munich's Olympic Stadion. Don't they know how to spell?



1 RESIDENT EVIL 4

PS2 XBOX CUBE
FROM: Capcom
WHAT IS IT?: Spine-shuddering reimagining of the long-running survival horror series.
END OF YEAR VERDICT: From screenshots, it looked too good to be true. It wasn't. With *Resi 4*, series producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi seems to have had his fill of the traditional *Resi*, torn up the rulebook like The Licker would a human head, and created something new and incredible. Stunning looks, real fear, mad villagers, Crazy Chainsaw Headsack Man, interactive cutscenes – and more gore than a nurse's training video on invasive surgical procedures. Plus, *tentacles coming out people's heads*. Everybody scream...
BEST BIT: The unrelenting action as a whole. Really, *Resi 4* is bloodier than a butcher's knife at pig-chopping time.

TOP 5s

Kieron

1. God of War
2. Civilisation 4
3. Fahrenheit
4. Psychonauts
5. Darwinia

DARWINIA: A coder with an idea. That's all you need. *Darwinia's* a magical world full of the death of computer progams, and unlike anything else this year. And the sound effects! Szzzik! Ptth! Ptan!

Joel

1. God Of War
2. Resident Evil 4
3. Total Overdose
4. Shadow Of The Colossus
5. Ossu! Tatakae! Ouendan!

OUENDAN: Who *doesn't* want to pretend they're part of a sinister trenchcoat-clad cheerleading squad dancing along to some of J-pop's greatest hits?

REVIEWS

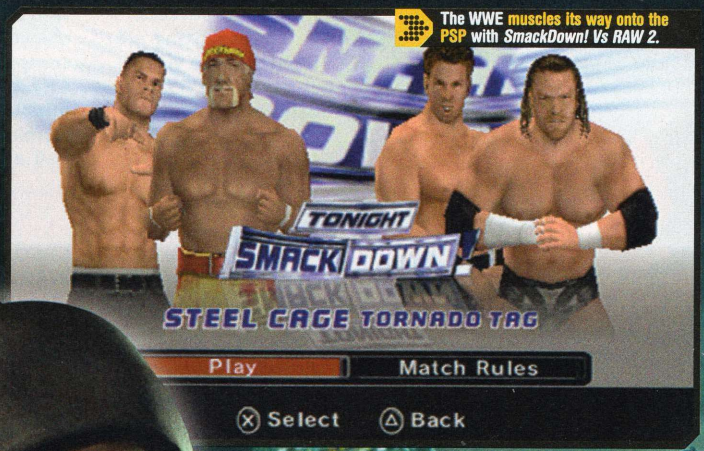
GAMES MASTER

✔ EVERY GAME ✔ EVERY FORMAT ✔ EVERY MONTH

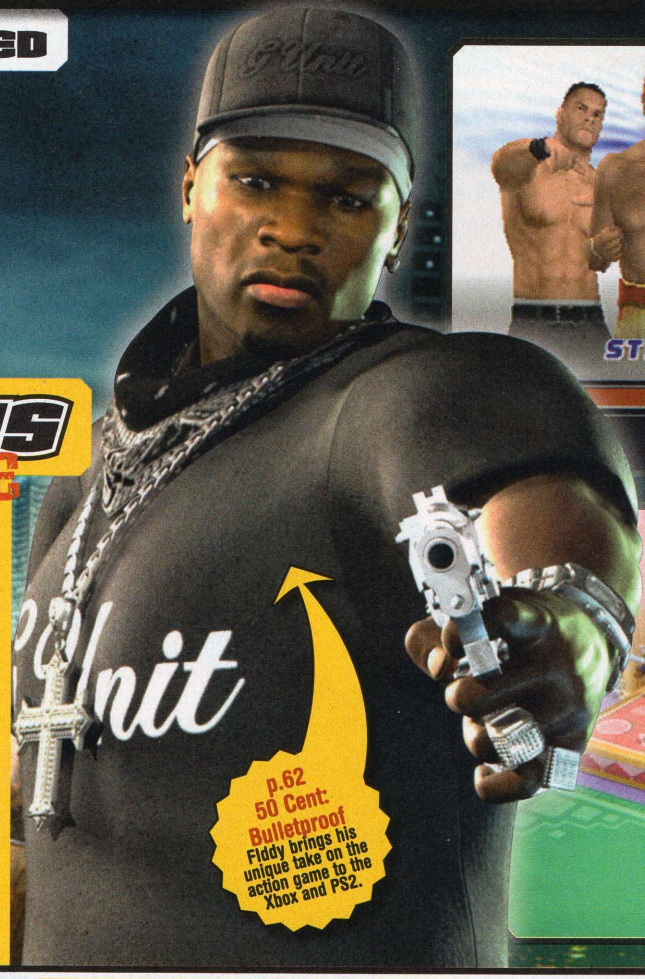
KATH BRICE

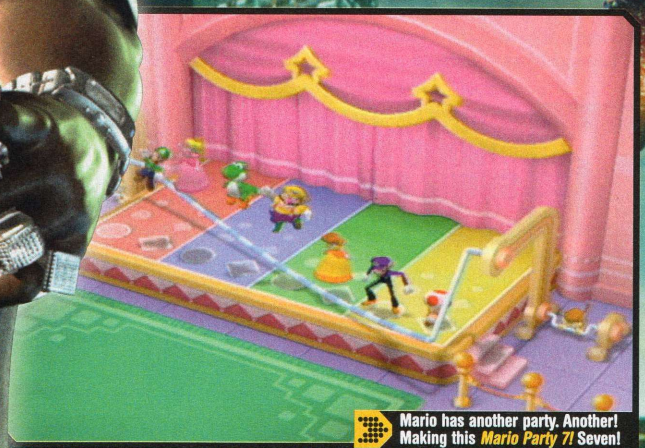
REVIEWS ED

And the big news this month is still Xbox 360. *Perfect Dark Zero* was finally finished and ready for us to review this month and this is where you'll find the first, totally honest review of Rare's massively anticipated shooter. We also round-up all the other 360 launch games. There's plenty for everyone else too – *True Crime: New York City, Animal Crossing DS, Battalion Wars* and *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones* to name just a few. It's been a great year for games – we're going to be playing this lot well in the new year...



The WWE muscles its way onto the PSP with *SmackDown! Vs RAW 2*.





Mario has another party. Another! Making this *Mario Party 7!* Seven!

REVIEWS GM GUARANTEE

Only *GM* has reviews you can trust. This is why...

- We play and judge games on every format. We're not biased to any particular machine. We're just biased towards good games.
- We only review finished code.
- We only use expert, experienced game players who know what they're talking about.
- We're 100% independent and honest. If a game's bad, we'll say so.
- We show and tell you more about a game than any other mag or web site. No one else crams as much in.
- Games are expensive. We want to make sure you never buy a bad one.

HOW GM'S REVIEWS WORK

Here's a guided tour around the only reviews you should trust.

Other Formats
What's it like on your machine?
XBOX Link To The Past/Four Swords, The original Zelda co-op, in handheld form. 95%
The closest alternatives on yo
CUBE Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance 2 88%
PS2 Final Fantasy XI 90%

Find out if the game's on your machine. We'll show every format it's set for, with the arrow showing you which version we've reviewed.

It's crunch time. Here's where you'll find the real deal for every game. Each title is rigorously assessed in three disciplines:

GRAPHICS: What does it look like? Does it move smoothly? Enough variety?

GAMEPLAY: Does the game work? Is it satisfying and fun to play, or a pain in the arse?

LIFESPAN: Is there enough of it? Will you be playing this title for months or mere minutes?

Your 'at a glance' guide to the game and its main features. First-person or third-person? How many levels? Bosses? You'll find it here.

Game not reviewed on your console? Check out this box to see how the other versions are coming on, or for the most similar game you can play on your machine right now.

The best and worst things about the game dragged out and held at bullet point!

The final verdict in one snappy soundbite, with the only score that counts at its side. Remember: it's not an average!

Your instant look at some in-game action so you know how it plays. If it's a slower strategy game we'll show you how it all works.

JUDGEMENT JEZ

GM LOVES
- The best co-operative game on the 'Cube and a perfect argument for connectivity
- Brilliant puzzles that aren't too difficult
- A cracking adventure for the single player

GM HATES
- It's a very expensive game to play properly – you'll need four GBAs and link cables for four players
- It looks like a GBA game a lot of the time

GRAPHICS 90%
Cute GBA-type sprites mixed with marvellous special effects.

GAMEPLAY 90%
Amazing co-operative gameplay and some ingenious puzzles.

LIFESPAN 90%
As a multi-player it could last for months, but not so long on your own.

OVERALL
89%
Play with three mates with GBA's, and you've got one of the best games on the 'Cube.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ...Final Fantasy Origins, 83%
WORSE THAN: ...Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, 97%
WAIT FOR: ...The new 'adult' Zelda
BEST PRICE: ...£29.99, amazon.co.uk

Still undecided after reading the review? This box tells you about anything better or worth waiting for, and the cheapest place to buy it.

REVIEWS: • OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GC • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO • SPECIAL: GBA, LINK CABLE • OTHER FORMATS: GBA • CALL: 01932 805390 • PLAYERS: 1-4

WHAT IS IT?
Brilliant puzzle-laden four-player Zelda action that uses GBA connectivity.

IN GAME CLIP: The first five minutes of play. Learn the ropes monsters, burn grass!

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

GM's badge of gaming greatness is only given to classic games. If a game gets one of these it's an essential purchase.

THE SCORE

90 TO 100%
Tippety top cream of the crop. If you own the console, buy this!

80 TO 89%
A great game. If you like the sound of it, you should get it in.

70 TO 79%
Neat enough but a little lacking. Still, if you really must have it...

60 TO 69%
A game scuppered by an annoying flaw or two. Shame.

50 TO 59%
Above average but only just. Spend your cash elsewhere.

40 TO 49%
Quite simply not very good. We played it – we didn't like it.

30 TO 39%
Oh dear. Perhaps the programmers should play some 'games'.

20 TO 29%
What the...?! This looks awful and plays awful as well.

10 TO 19%
Not a videogame at all but a device of mental torture.

0 TO 9%
Like dangling your diddlies in a mincing machine.

p.52
It's the reddest of all heads
Find out if Joanna Dark is a true ginger-warrior.
p.70
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer
The super-duper family are back!

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Quake 4 360 91
Ridge Racer 6 360 86
The Sims 2 DS 80
Ski Racing 2006 PS2 XBOX PC 99
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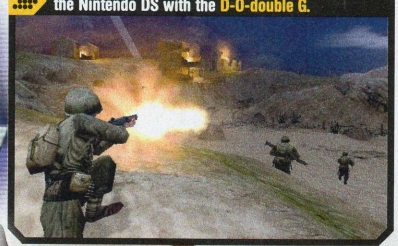
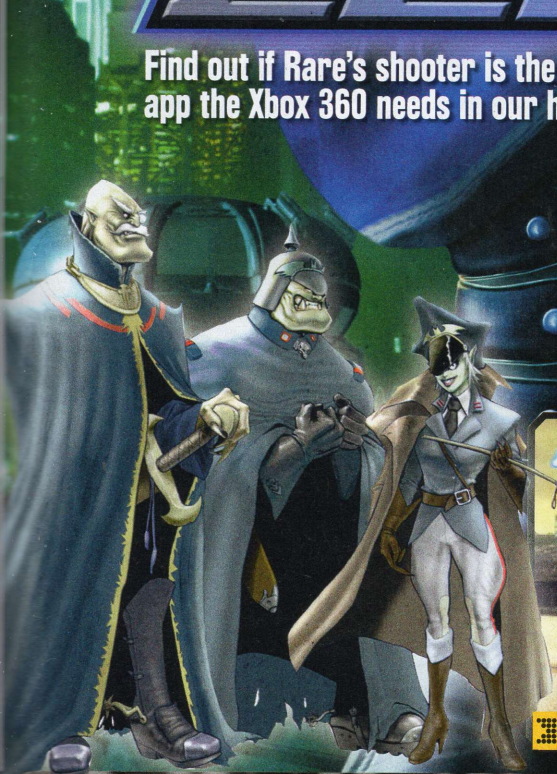
Tony Hawk's American Sk8Land DS 64
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland 360 90
Star Wars Battlefront 2 PSP 65
World Poker Tour PS2 XBOX 99
WWE: SmackDown! Vs Raw 2006 PSP 85
X-Men Legends 2 PSP 99

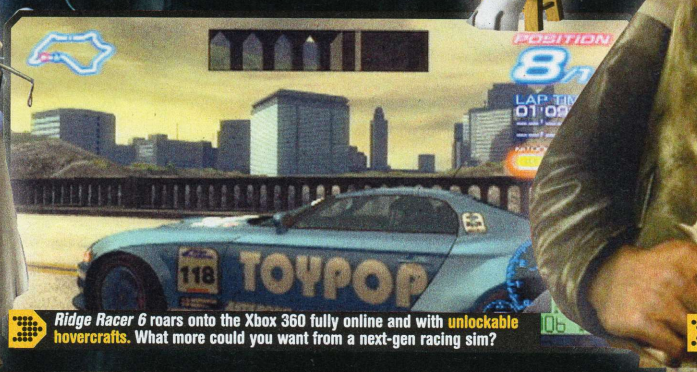
PERFECT DARK ZERO

Find out if Rare's shooter is the stone cold killer-app the Xbox 360 needs in our huge review

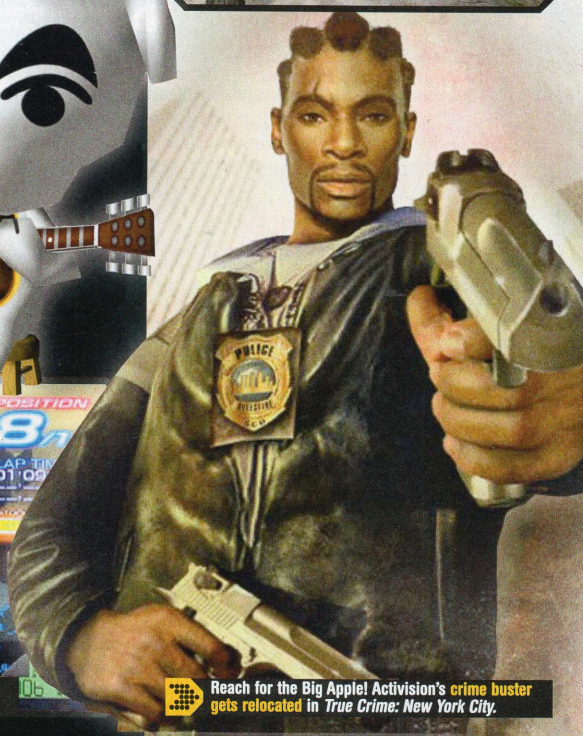
See if *Animal Crossing* is worth singing about on the Nintendo DS with the D-O-double G.







Ridge Racer 6 roars onto the Xbox 360 fully online and with unlockable hovercrafts. What more could you want from a next-gen racing sim?



Reach for the Big Apple! Activision's crime buster gets relocated in *True Crime: New York City*.

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £44.99
DEVELOPER: RARE • PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS • ONLINE: VS, DARK OPS, CO-OP
SPECIAL: SPECIAL EDITION AVAILABLE • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.RAREWARE.NET • PLAYERS: 1-32

XBOX 360

WHAT'S IT?

Long-awaited first-person shooter starring Jo Dark, not to mention some fearsome weapons

- 13 missions, which can be played co-op
- Up to 32 players online

GAMEPLAY

IN-GAME BUG: Have fun shooting enemies. Watch out for their dialogue – that's worth hiding from too.

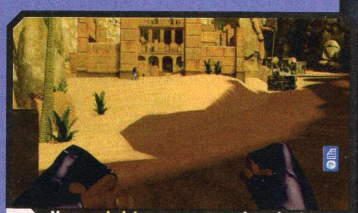
PERFECT DARK ZERO

3... 2... 1... Zero. Do we have lift off?

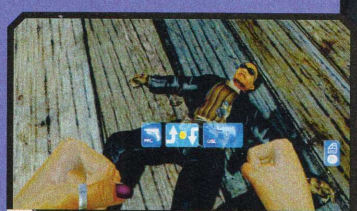
HANDS FREE

In *Perfect Dark Zero*, guns are not the only answer. Jo can do a lot without an elephant-shredding handcannon wrapped around her trigger finger, which is typical of the multi-faceted combat in the game. It's worth noting that holding a heavier weapon will slow Jo down, so swap to a pistol if you need to make a quick dash while still firing. You can press down on the D-pad at any time in order to drop a weapon, but it's not as dumb an idea as it sounds...

When you are bare handed, you can thump people or, better yet, steal their weapon.



You can holster your weapon in order to break into a run and whip it out again.



Of course, you can still melee attack people up-close with a weapon in use.

ROCKET SCIENCE

Rocket launchers are brilliant. 32 players jogging around a small, cramped arena, wielding explosive suicide machines on their shoulders? See – brilliant.

Much like *Halo's* launcher, using it blinds you by taking up the right of the screen.

You can do stuff like launch and remote-pilot rockets, with a good degree of control.

Well, we've all waited long enough for *Perfect Dark Zero*, so we'll get straight into the meat of the review – the single-player campaign is the weakest portion of the game. It's sometimes beautiful, sometimes drab, it features some enjoyable levels and some dull ones. The voice acting is often annoying, the cutscenes feel patchy and rough around the edges, while some of the music is damn near awful, using guitars in the same way that muggers use flick knives.

Thing is, some of the dialogue is so cheesy ("I'm going to drop you like a bad conversation!" is our current favourite), and some of the action-heavy tunes are so overbearing they're almost brilliant – just because they're so overblown.

Still, if you like your stories to be engaging, well paced and

There's an impressive physics engine at work, but it's rarely put to any use, sadly.

SPACEY TRAVEL

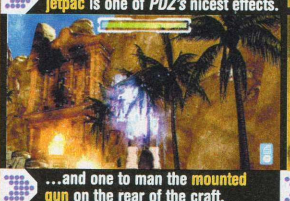
Hovercrafts and jetpacs have made it into the final code for *PDZ*, but we see no sign of the motorbikes that were mooted some time back. Still, there's plenty of chaos and mischief to be had without wheels...

Jetpacs can hover while firing a continuous stream of bullets.

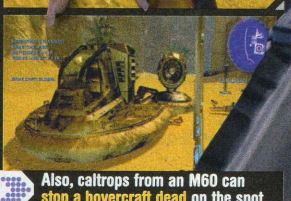
It'll also walk on ground, if you don't fancy being an mid-air target.

Hovercrafts hold two people – one to pilot it, much like a Warthog...

The purple cloud from a destroyed jetpac is one of *PDZ's* nicest effects.



...and one to man the mounted gun on the rear of the craft.



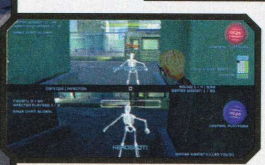
Also, caltrops from an M60 can stop a hovercraft dead on the spot.

DARK OPS

This is a more serious mode than standard Deathmatch, giving each player just one life per round.

Sabotage, onslaught, eradication and infection game modes are available for you to try out.

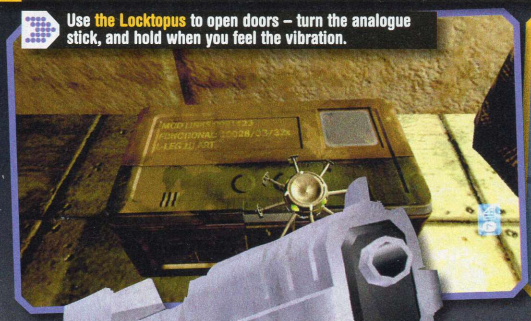
In order to get decent weapons, and even vehicles, you'll have to buy them with cash from kills.



You can't have bots in Dark Ops, only humans. Maybe a future download will fix that?

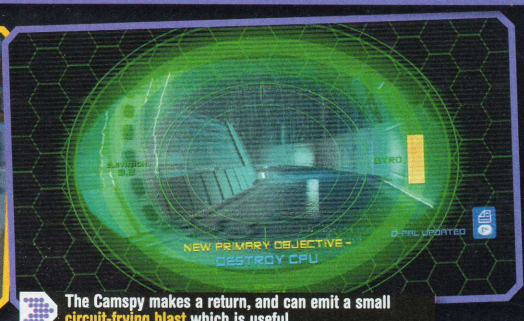
INSPECT HER GADGETS

Jo's inventory has room for a handful of gadgets. These are usually predetermined based on the nature of each story mission. You only get to use them when prompted, so there's little room for improvisation.



Use the Locktopus to open doors – turn the analogue stick, and hold when you feel the vibration.

The Data Thief let's you hack into door panels, with a series of timed button presses.

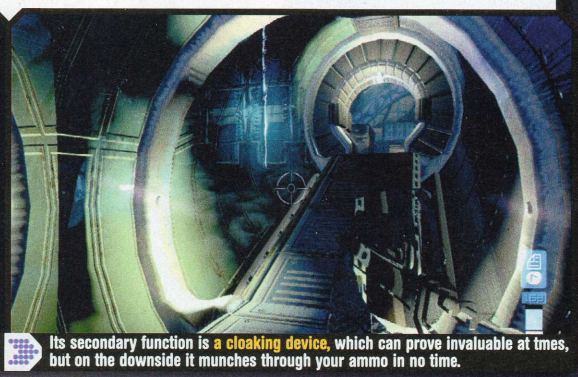


The Camspy makes a return, and can emit a small circuit-frying blast which is useful.

PLASMA RIFLE 101

You won't get your hands on this until the last third of the single-player campaign, but it's powerful enough to make replaying earlier stages fun.

Standard fire, which is a impressive-looking ball of sizzling plasma is dangerous, but it's much slower than the other weapons.

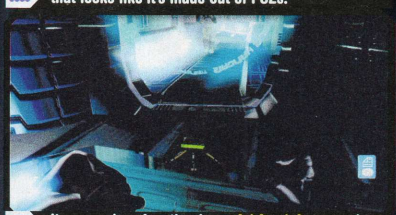


Its secondary function is a cloaking device, which can prove invaluable at tmes, but on the downside it munches through your ammo in no time.

LAPTOP 101

Another classic PD weapon is the Laptop gun. Why such a stupid name?

The Laptop gun folds out into a formidable rifle, that looks like it's made out of PS2s.



Its secondary function is useful for defence – slap on a wall or floor as a makeshift turret.

"SOME OF THE TEXTURES HERE DESERVE TO STAR IN THEIR OWN 2006 CALENDAR"

intriguing, there are likely to be plenty of moments in *Perfect Dark Zero* to make you wince. Not that the game doesn't have production values – there's a *lot* of effort that's gone into the game's looks; some of the textures here deserve to star in their own 2006 calendar (for charity, naturally). Cobbles, wet walls, shiny concrete – this game has these things down pat.

SET YOUR SIGHTS

There are some gorgeous views on offer, too, from the gargantuan scale of the space rocket resting on the Trinity launch platform and the African bridge and pyramid, to the incidental stuff, like a slick, shiny series of indoor waterfalls in the Nightclub stage.

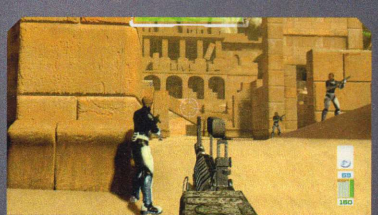
While the game has some sights for sore eyes, there are a handful of just plain sore sights, though, including some ugly character models and stages where the environments look all too samey. And losing your way is often an issue; there's a blue arrowed line that pops up on the floor when you need guidance as to where to go next, and it's your best friend during your first playthrough, as the levels are often huge and somewhat confusing.

The opening levels are by far the most interesting: Nightclub, Rooftops and Subway. These feel like they've got some scope for replay and for finding new ways of tackling their biggest gunfights. Then it all gets a little messy through the latter stages of a visit to the far east and the jungles of South America – which just feels like one lengthy shootout after another – before coming good with the standout African stages. It then ends on a rather surreal low point, with a final boss who's unbelievably easy to defeat, in a confrontation that's slightly more bonkers than mere sci-fi.

Boss fights in general are a bit limp, too. It's like playing an excellent FPS through one eye, and a messy, problematic one through the other, and having to play both at the same time.

IT'S A FAIR CO-OP

Coming to it after the physics antics of *Half-Life 2*, the brilliant use of foliage and environment in *Far Cry Instincts*, or the gadget-rich stealth of *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*, *Perfect Dark Zero* feels like a lesser game on each of those counts. Play it through once, on your own, and you'll likely feel underwhelmed. But it's not



Your energy bar recharges, but enemy attacks permanently chip tiny strips off it.

The bladed Hawk Boomerang looks cool but is useless in a precision firefight.

ZOOM KEEPER

If your gun doesn't have a zoom scopes, use precision aiming. Squeeze the left trigger, and Jo holds the gun up to her nose.

HIGHERED GUNS

Weapons in *PDZ* appear in a variety of categories – Heavy, Assault, Pistol, etc. – and you collect new weapons by completing a stage with them in your inventory. And with each weapon you earn comes a new way to tackle your favourite gunfight on a different level, or it may be essential completing other stages on the hardest difficulty.

The CMP-150 projects **a hologram of you**, to distract enemy fire away from you.

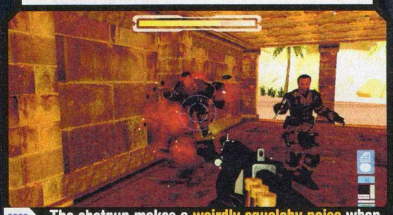
The Mag gun supercharges its rounds so that they bounce off walls at **high speed**.

The M60 takes two hours to reload, but packs enough of a punch to **kill a forest**.

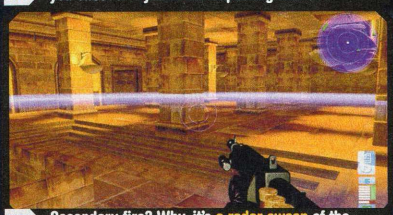
Uzi's can be **dual-wielded**, or thrown to the floor, where they become proximity mines.

SHOTGUN 101

Besides sending enemies sprawling, *PDZ's* shotgun has a trick up its barrel...



The shotgun makes a **weirdly squelchy noise** when you shoot it – you're not expecting *that*...

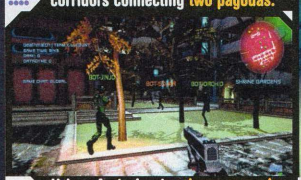


Secondary fire? Why, it's **a radar sweep** of the vicinity, to reveal or confuse enemies.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES

Levels can be shrunk or expanded, and there are variations that change the shape of each map (but not the themes of the stages).

Tower is an icy stage, with narrow corridors connecting **two pagodas**.



Urban, featuring two **large carparks**, is an ideal map for ambushes.

The **subway stage** features a labyrinth of backrooms and several train platforms, but there's no room for vehicles which is a shame.

Temple features lots of square, leafy arenas to stalk opponents in.

Old Town is a cross between **Urban and Desert** – all yellow and rooftops.

really trying to be any of these things mentioned above. In truth, the core of the game is weaponry – once you've collected a fistful guns, each with their own quirky and powerful optional abilities, you'll want to return to a handful of early levels to put them through their paces. It's a satisfying experience.

LIVE AND KICKING

Once you've got a handle on the layout of a level, and have an arsenal of favourite weapons, *PDZ* becomes a more pleasurable experience, and you can begin to savour the tight, precise firepower that you get to wield. And as for Jo's covering move – where she can hide behind and below objects – it's a *lovely* touch, one that comes in very, very useful. The button prompt to use it can sometime be tricky to activate, though.

Get another player involved, and you can play every story mission with a friend in tow, either on the same machine, or over Live. Like *Kameo*, it increases the appeal of the game a good amount, especially since certain stages offer a whole new route and perspective for the second player. Get even more people involved, though, and you can start to explore *PDZ's* terrific multi-player portion, which is an obvious place for the weapons to come in to their own. There aren't as many game types as you're given in *Halo 2*, but that's compensated for by customisable weapon sets – something that can change the pace and focus of a battle quite significantly.

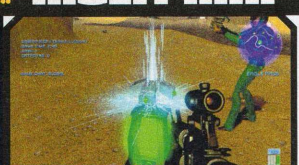
DECENT DARK

Put simply, getting to trade headshots and friendly fire with a pile of others (up to 32 in total, not 64 as was originally planned) is top-notch fun. And there's some great design in the multi-player aspect, such as the fact that enemies are *always* red and allies are *always* green, and using noisy weapons makes you more visible on your opponents' radar. You can play offline, too, with up to 15 bots; it's a shame there aren't more, but playing Rockets Only with jetpacks enabled is the definition of a riot. It's a shame there's no bot-based ranking/career mode, though.

So, there you have it. *Perfect Dark Zero* – a long time in the making, a game with a strong multi-player aspect and a single-player offering that has flashes of brilliance and beauty throughout (in between its irritating characters and more unfocused or repetitive sections). And it's all held together by some thoughtful and detailed weaponry, the kind of arsenal

MULTI MAP

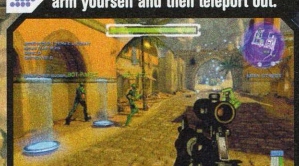
There are just six maps available for multi-player matches, but they're huge – like Wembley Arena huge. They can be scaled, too, meaning that you can crop each map to host a game with just a handful of players, without you all getting lost and tearful. Teleports are dotted throughout the larger maps that, once captured, allow your squad to spawn closer to your enemies, and get back into the fray as quickly as possible. Incidentally, Rare is planning to offer downloadable map packs in the future, that you can purchase over Xbox Live.



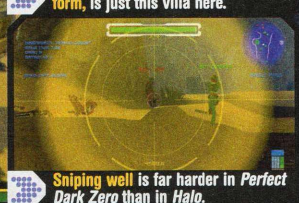
Find a new **teleport point** and you'll have to hack it in order to use it.

This is **your hub** – where you spawn, arm yourself and then teleport out.

The full **Desert stage** is, erm, roomy. Even with 32 players it can feel a little empty.



The Desert stage, in its **smallest form**, is just this villa here.



Sniping well is far harder in *Perfect Dark Zero* than in *Halo*.

CREW CUTS

Jack Dark is Jo's father. His role is to get annoyed and get hurt somehow during every level.

Chandra is Jo's radio contact and mission advisor. She's also a bit... well, you'll see.

Daniel Carrington is hefty Scot who becomes Jo's most trusted ally. Wears a kilt, and looks silly.

Mei Hem is a constant trouble for Jo. Not that she has the dress sense of a worthy foe.

RULE-ETTE

The Deathmatch portion of the game has a thorough range of customisable options. Rare is planning to release further multi-player modes which can be downloaded over Live.

There are several themed **preset weapon sets** already available to choose from...

... but you're able to customise your **own ideal arsenals**, if you've got the inclination.

You can only have a **maximum of 15 bots** to a game, but that should be enough.

Plus, you'll get to choose **your skin set**, from Dark/dataDyne themes, and more.

HIT 'N' RUN

Among *PDZ's* weapon set is a close-combat category – tools that become useful in some situations, such as the stealthier Deathmatch showdowns between few players.

The riot shield makes you immune to melee attacks and makes you look like **a bit of a coward.**

The Viblade offers a useful bullet shield and can be found at... now, that would be a spoiler.

When playing **Team Deathmatch**, you can use the map to order bots around.

Other Formats

The closest alternative on your console:

XBOX	Half-Life 2	95%
PS2	TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	88%
CUBE	Metroid Prime	97%
PC	Far Cry Instincts	89%

RCP-90 101

The RCP has an essential secondary feature for the jungle stages.

Before anything else, the RCP has a good rate of fire and a **generous clip size.**

The RCP's 'threat detector' mode picks out enemies and allies with **brilliant clarity.**

we've not had since, well, the original *Perfect Dark*. We've had plenty of other FPSs since, though, which have had better stories and set-pieces than *Perfect Dark Zero*, but it's impressively satisfying when it all comes together at some of the game's more memorable shootouts.

It's a game that only adds up to the sum of its parts, but it does have plenty of parts to offer. It holds its own alongside *Quake 4* and *Call of Duty 2* as a worthy launch FPS for 360, but instead of blowing us away – as was hoped – it's just kind of fanned us nicely in the face for a good, enjoyable while.

It's best played with others, though, so make sure that you're not alone in this Dark. GM

"IT'S ALL HELD TOGETHER BY THOUGHTFUL AND DETAILED WEAPONRY"

JUDGEMENT

STEVE

GM LOVES	GM HATES
+ Inventive guns that are tons of fun to use	- The scrappy cut-scenes, an overkill of guitars and lame script
+ The full-on range of multi-player possibilities	- There's little scope for creative use of gadgets
+ Large helpings of enemies	- The weaker missions in the middle of the game

GRAPHICS 8/10
Plenty of impressive scale and detail, with the odd rough patch here and there.

GAMEPLAY 8/10
Too few great set-pieces, but gunplay is accurate and oh so satisfying.

LIFESPAN 9/10
Multi-player is hugely enjoyable, while co-op really enlivens Story mode.

OVERALL

85%

Becomes better the more time you spend on it, but has too many foibles to make it essential.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

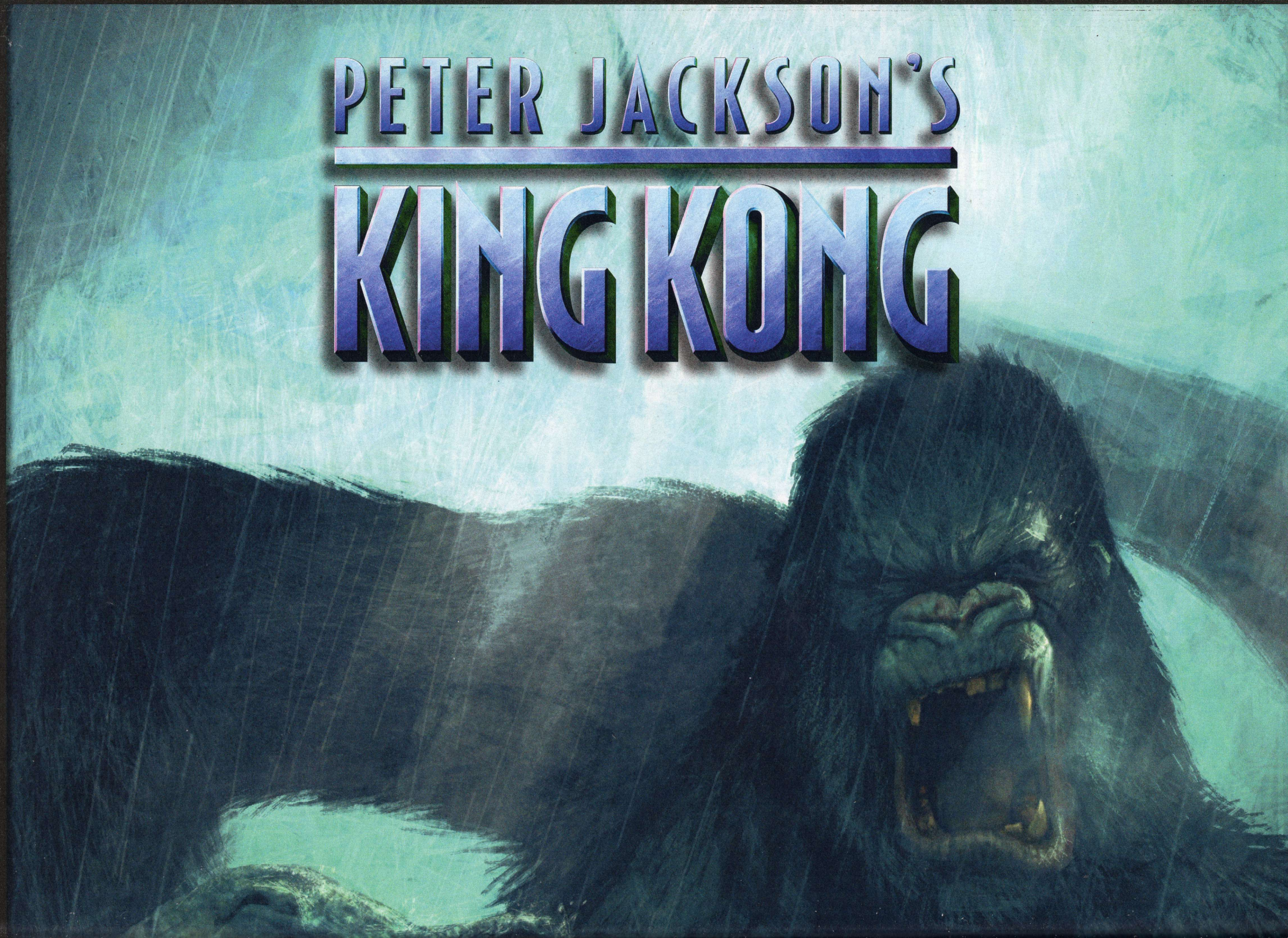
BETTER THAN: ..... Medal of Honor, 89%
WORSE THAN: ..... Halo 2 (Xbox), 95%
WAIT FOR: ..... Gears of War, Spring 2006
BEST PRICE: ..... £39.99, amazon.co.uk

BEST BIT!

The Bridge: Assault stage. It's awesomely huge, has lots to shoot at and a good sense of being part of a frenzied allied push to cross it.

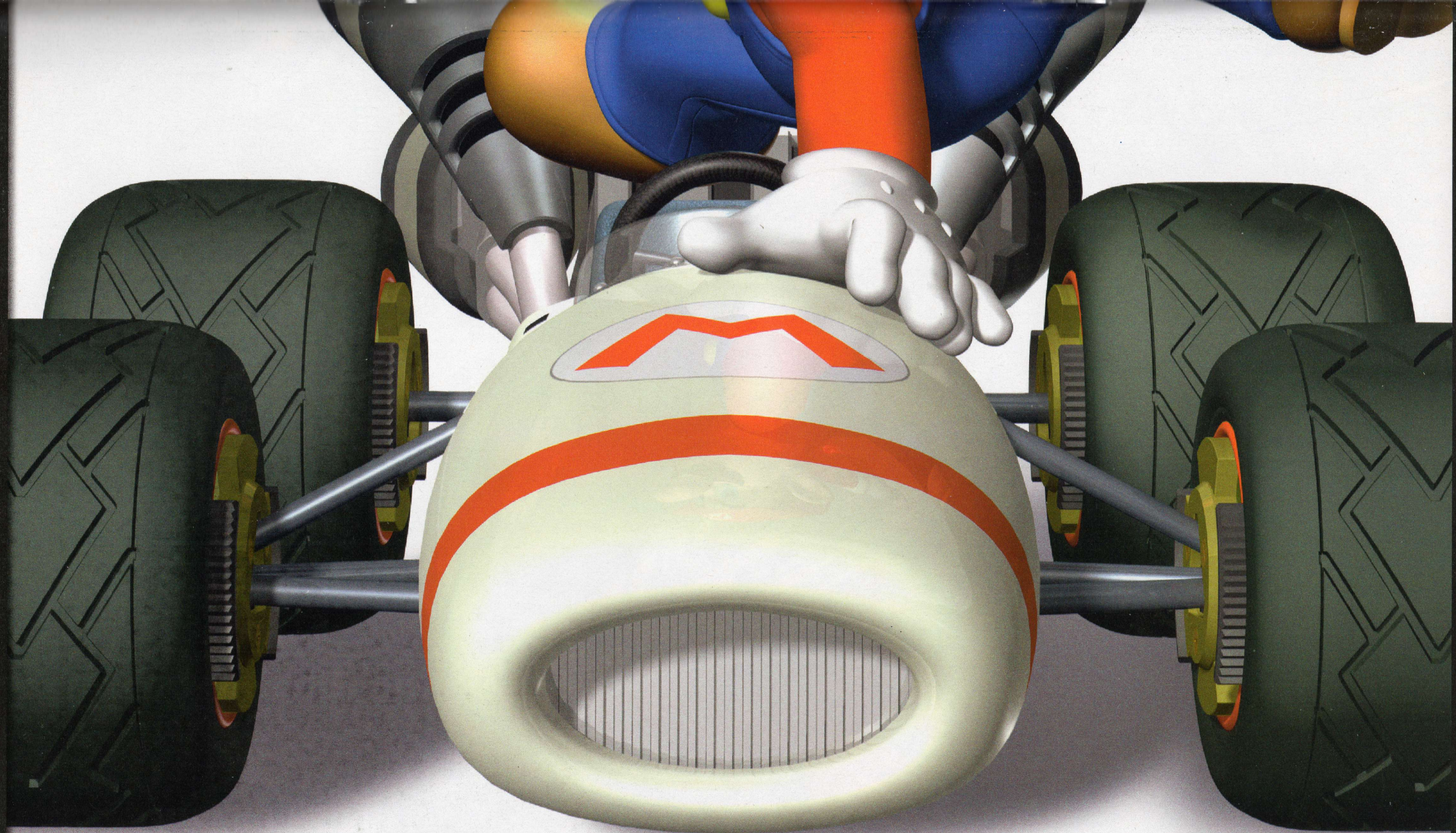
It's a shame that this stage comes so late in the game, as it does a convincing job...

...of making us feel like we're playing an FPS on a new console with super powers.


PETER JACKSON'S
KING KONG

PERFECT DARK
ZERO
GAMES MASTER

MARIO KART® DS



MAGSEC 9mm

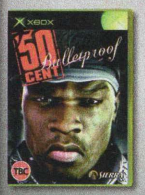
GAMES MASTER

REVIEW

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £39.9
DEVELOPER: GENUINE GAMES • PUBLISHER: VIVENDI • ONLINE: NO
OTHER FORMATS: PS2 • WEB: WWW.50CENTBULLETPROOF.COM • PLAYERS: 1

PS2 XBOX

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?



An action game set inside 50 Cent's mind which seems to be full of guns, ho's and people getting stabbed in the head.

- 13 50 Cent tracks
- Over 100 tracks by producer Sha Money XL

FOUR OUT OF FIVE

This horrific assault on a larger man is called a Counter Kill.

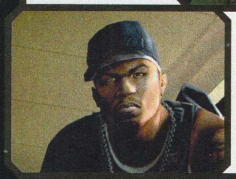
18

THE G-UNIT

Tony Yayo – the explosive expert. In real life he's 26 years old, a close friend of Fifty and is 'real – like milk'. We like milk as well.

Lloyd Bank – he's really good at cracking safes and unlocking doors. He looks a bit like Craig David. Real name Christopher Lloyd.

Young Buck – Newest member of the G-Unit, just like 50 Cent, he's been shot a few times. You would have thought he'd had enough of guns.



50 Cent – our hero. He's an expert in stabbing people in the head and getting shot a lot. He's been shot in real life, too – nine times.

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF

Not rap but something that sounds similar

There's a number of reasons why this 50 Cent game will get people's back up. You could see it as less of game, more of an interactive marketing tool to promote the 50 Cent brand. Or you could see it as the embodiment of all that's wrong in videogames today – licences, derivative gameplay, gloomy visuals, contrived 'street' styling – all rolled into one spiteful ball.

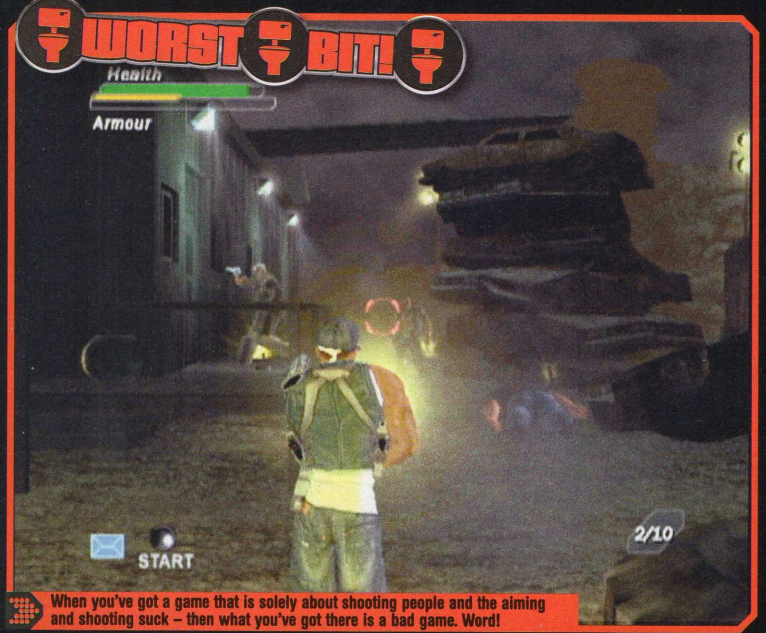
Our problem with it, however, is far more straightforward – it's because it is a woefully bad, poorly put together game that's hideous to play.

G-WHIZZ

The actual concept feels like a live-streaming beamed out of the imagination of 50 himself: he's a really tough gangsta and so are his mates G-Unit, and together they must avenge the death of one of their friends by shooting vigilantes and swearing a lot.

50 does this with a *Max Payne*-style third-perspective and no lock-on targeting – instead there's an onscreen reticule to assist aiming. So immediately this is more of challenge than an EA *Bond* game. But then it soars past being a 'challenge' to frustratingly difficult as the reticule is as easy to control accurately as a kite. Even on the lowest sensitive setting you end up swishing bullets right past a target's

Every time 50 dies it seems he goes up to dual wielding gangsta heaven. Bless.



When you've got a game that is solely about shooting people and the aiming and shooting suck – then what you've got there is a bad game. Word!

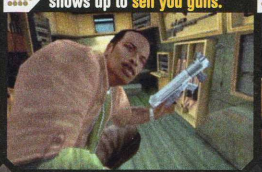
Look! We've put the crosshair on 50's head. Unfortunately he can't shoot himself though.

HUB BE GOOD TO ME

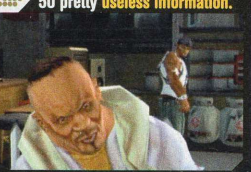
There's a hub to 50's world which looks like a free roaming section, but the invisible walls soon put you straight on that. It's here 50 can speak to colourful characters such as Dr. Dre and Eminem and buy guns and medicine.

You meet bent cop McVicar who's played by Eminem.

Then there's Dr. Dre who shows up to sell you guns.



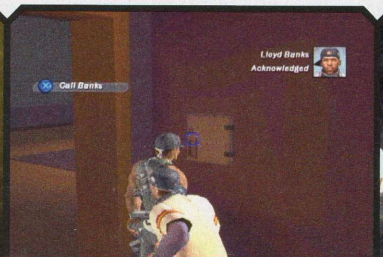
Then there's oddballs that give 50 pretty useless information.



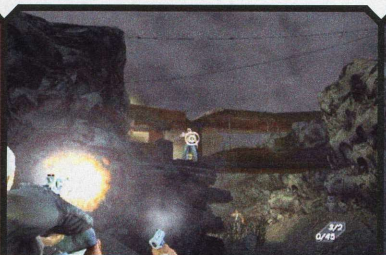
WITH FRIENDS LIKE

For many of the missions in *Bulletproof*, Mr Cent is accompanied by the G-Unit, who usually follow him around doing useful things like swearing (it's like you're in charge of a Tourettes sufferers day out). The rest of the time they just get in the way, with their big muscles and oversized sportswear.

Young Buck is trapped on a door, which means you can't get past him. Well done, Young Buck.



50 calls Banks to unlock a safe but doesn't move. So Banks traps 50 against the wall.

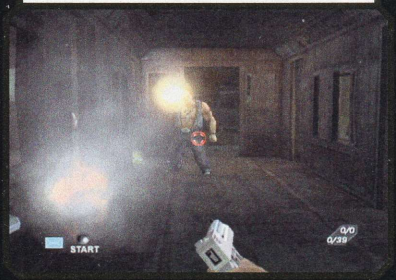


While taking aim on a gang member, McVicar alerts the gang by running in and blasting. Great.

Then there's the getting in the way, running into you, walking past your crosshairs. Real annoying.

AIM TO PLEASE

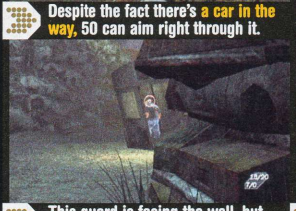
To make shots more accurate, if you hold the reticule over a target it goes red meaning you hit them more accurately. It could even lead to a one shot kill head shot if you aim accurately enough – but this is entirely useless unless the target is completely still.



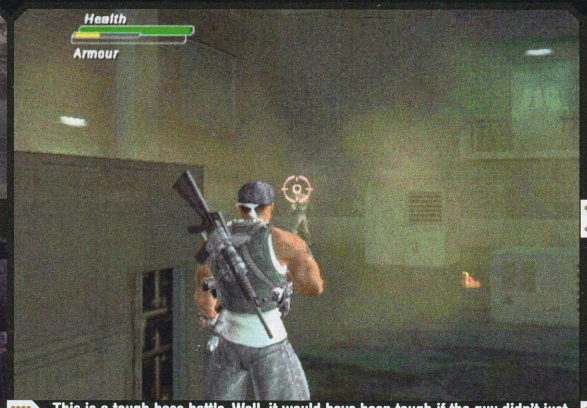
FAULTY POWERS

The way to play the game is figuring out how to use the many faults to your advantage, such as being able to shoot through parts of the scenery.

Despite the fact there's a car in the way, 50 can aim right through it.

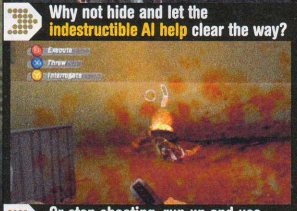


This guard is facing the wall, but he's in the middle of a gunfight.



This is a tough boss battle. Well, it would have been tough if the guy didn't just run into a corner with his back turned, making him the easiest of targets.

Why not hide and let the indestructible AI help clear the way?



Or stop shooting, run up and use Counter Kills or hostage taking.

head that's RIGHT in front you. To make it even worse, no-one goes down easily. You can empty a clip into a man that's not wearing even a thermal vest, never a mind a bulletproof one, and he'll still be standing there – badly rendered and swearing at you.

G-EEPERS

There is an extra aiming system (see Aim to Please) but this just complicates matters. And the sorrow doesn't end there. You have AI support which is often pathetic (see With Friends...) and a camera that melt into walls and hides the star of the game so often that it might as well have a been a FPS. More than once you're asked to pick up 'stuff'. STUFF! Couldn't they be more creative than that? What next? Defuse some 'gubbins', unlock the 'whatsit'? Christ!

G-SUS

There is the argument that this is more of a fan package, as it is stuffed with exclusive tracks and content, and you can applaud the way 50 Cent has obviously backed the project. But all the *Candy Shop* videos in the world can't make up for the game being such a turd. Not even the decent cutscenes or the cameos by Dr. Dre and Eminem. This is crap.

Perhaps this is the game 50 Cent really wants but if he feels that something so ugly, violent and incredibly hard reflects him accurately, he should do something about his self esteem. GM

Other Formats
What's it like on your machine?

PS2 Just as awkward to play but doesn't lose any of the visual 'quality'.

The closest alternative on your consoles:

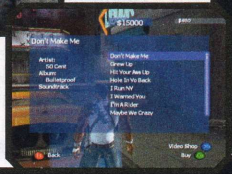
PC Dead to Rights 2.....N/A
CUBE True Crime: New York City.....72%

CASH MONEY

Just to make the game that little bit nastier, you can steal the wallets from the people you kill.

You can also find piles of cash in safes with which you can buy health and weapons.

Curiously, 50 can buy his own music from the carboot of a dodgy guy on the street.



"ALL THE CANDY SHOP VIDEOS CAN'T MAKE UP FOR THE GAME BEING SUCH A TURD"

As well as the stab to the head, 50 has this charming stab to the chest and carve.

Here's 50 as we know and love him – sitting on a very nice car rapping about killing people.

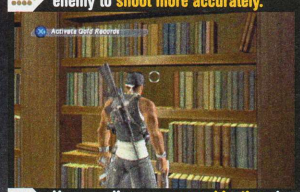
COVER LOVER

50 can back up against walls for cover, but don't expect it to help you in any way.

Press the X button and 50 will put his back against the wall.

50 can then lean out and try take aim. But he still gets shot.

From here you can try to lock on the enemy to shoot more accurately.



You can discover some objectives by brushing up against the wall.

JUDGEMENT

DRIVE

GM LOVES

+ The cutscenes – often quite funny
+ The voice acting – often quite funny
+ The videos – often quite funny

GM HATES

- The aiming, the graphics, the relentless violence, the relentless swearing, the control system, the level designs, the AI of the enemy, the AI of the support, the weapons, the menu...

GRAPHICS 10%
The character models are fine, but the levels are appalling. Gloomy and lazy.

GAMEPLAY 5%
Horribly flawed – a shooting game where it's so hard to actually shoot anyone.

LIFESPAN 8%
There's loads of 50 Cent content to unlock if you've collected enough money.

OVERALL
46%

A cynical game that's distressing and joyless to play. Just buy 50 Cent's music instead.

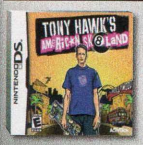
SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....Crime Life, 36%
WORSE THAN:.....Max Payne 2, 85%
WAIT FOR:.....State of Emergency 2, TBC
BEST PRICE:.....£29.99, play.com

REVIEW

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: DS • PRICE: £34.99
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION • WIFI: HEAD TO HEAD
SPECIAL: NOTHING • OTHER FORMATS: GBA • WEB: WWW.ACTIVISION.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

GAME BOY ADVANCE
DS

WHAT IS IT?



It's *Tony Hawk's* trimmed and clipped to near perfection to suit the dual screens of the Nintendo handheld.

- WiFi multi-player
- Build your own skate park

PREVIOUSLY...

IN GAME BIT? Here's that old story, boy meets Tony Hawk, goes to LA becomes skate superstar. Typical.

TRICKSTYLUS

What makes *Sk8Land* work so well on the DS is that it's carefully tailored to use the touchscreen, but not to the point where it interferes with the gameplay. For example, to activate the special moves and obstacles, specific icons appear on the bottom screen – just touch them to time it.

Then when you've taken a tumble, you can activate the Freakout bar. Just hit the three fluctuating powers on the bottom screen to give your tantrum the necessary boost, then your self-respect damaging little strop can then be used to start off a new combo.

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND

It looks like Tony has found a lovely new home...

With this new generation of handhelds, it's interesting to see how developers are getting used to bringing their huge console creations into the palm of gamers' hands.

Often it's just a straight port – well, that's what the PSP usually gets – and we have to look on helplessly as the Sony handheld sweats and strains under the challenge. That's what happened with the recent Tony PSP game, so much so that there was slowdown and a less then perfect end product. What occasionally happens with the DS is that developers realise they have a unique opportunity to bring new life to old ideas. And this is the case with Sk8land as it's all the action of Tony Hawk's but trimmed, snipped and teased to fit DS perfectly.

PARK LIFE

Sk8land comes with a cel-shaded look which could be seen as a compromise, but the cartoony graphics give just enough details for the small screen, but more importantly it gives the skating the zip and flow you demand from Tony.

The controls are all as you expect, and you'll be chaining moves together in no time, especially if you pay attention to the great tutorial. But now and again the touchscreen ceases just being a map and comes into play – it's used for Special Tricks, a Tantrum mini-game and looking around for items.

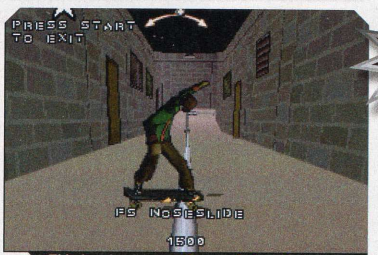
Then on top of that you use the in-built microphone to add special effects, play multi-player WiFi and even use the stylus to customise your deck. This is handheld gaming as it should be – specific to your mobile needs and extremely addictive. GM

"IT'S ALL THE ACTION TRIMMED TO FIT THE DS PERFECTLY"

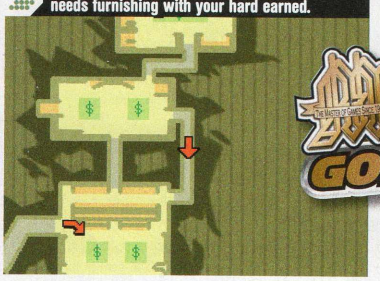
Other Contents

The closest alternative on your console:

GBA Tony Hawk's Sk8Land – uses the old and never really convincing isometric view.
CUBE Tony Hawk's American Wasteland – Not Tony's finest hour, it's all starting to tire.
PSP Tony Hawk's American Wasteland – Doesn't quite reach the consoles' levels of performance.



This is a barren warehouse skatepark that needs furnishing with your hard earned.



BEST BIT!

The wonderful Create-A mode which lets you loose with the stylus to customise anything you want. Please excuse our feeble effort though.

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

JUDGEMENT

DAVE

GM LOVES

+ The graphics
+ The excellent controls
+ The superb DS specific touches

GM HATES

- Picking up a new objective involves stopping for a chat. And stopping is tricky

GRAPHICS 86%

Tony gets cel-shaded, so there's not too much detail but it suits the DS well.

GAMEPLAY 86%

It's been honed beautifully for the DS and the cell shaded looks really works.

LIFESPAN 82%

You could lose hours just mucking around with the Create-A modes.

OVERALL

90%

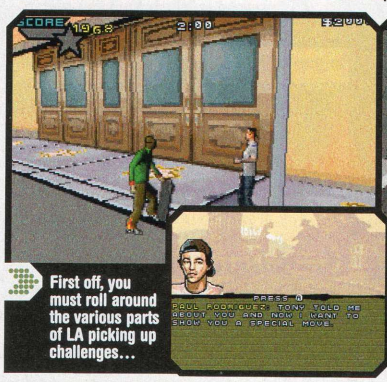
All the charm of the early *Tony* games combined with superb DS specific touches.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

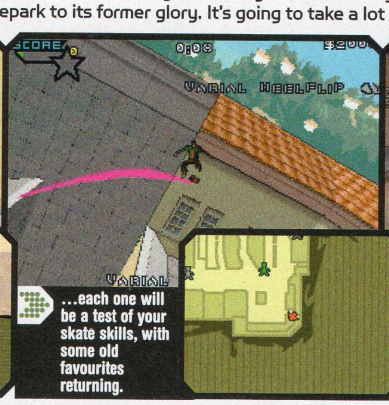
BETTER THAN: ..... Tony Hawk's American Sk8Land PSP, 80%
WORSE THAN: ..... Best of its type on the DS
WAIT FOR: ..... No man
BEST PRICE: ..... £25.99, play.com

IT KEEPS THEM OFF THE STREETS

There's a actually a noble cause at the heart of *Sk8land's* Story mode, as your skater is trying to impress a skate chick by gathering money to restore a warehouse-based skatepark to its former glory. It's going to take a lot of skating.



First off, you must roll around the various parts of LA picking up challenges...



...each one will be a test of your skate skills, with some old favourites returning.

When you've got enough cash, it's time to buy a new piece of piping etc.

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £34.99 • DEV: EA
• PUB: EA • SPECIAL: VERSUS/CO-OP • OTHER FORMATS: ALL OF THEM • WEB: WWW.FIFA06.EA.COM • PLAYERS: 1-4

All the player models look fine close-up, but from a distance they go all fuzzy and furry – like little animals in a zoo but there's less chance of them throwing their crap at you.

FIFA 06

Turning the PSP on its head...

There's one surprising inclusion in *FIFA 06* on the PSP. There's a new ball juggling mini-game which requires you to turn the handheld 45 degrees and view it length ways. Hardly revolutionary, but it's good to see EA are trying to provide the PSP with something fresh rather than just mindless ports.

Apart from that, it's just a mindless port which has been done well, but there's always one problem porting *FIFA* – you bring all *FIFA's* faults with it. You can't sprint away from tacklers, the defending is frustrating and seems to have no pattern, there's no 'feel' to the shooting, the passes often don't go to where you want them, nearly every goal you score is identical... we could go on. Every problem you have with *FIFA* on a big console, you'll have here – only everything is physically smaller so you'll hurt you eyes if you play too long.

FIFA PITCH

Football is a tricky game to recreate on small screen, as you have 22 men to accomodate as well as a large pitch. Trying to give a decent view of the action but not have the players microscopic-sized is always going to be challenge, and it isn't only *FIFA* that struggles with this – *Pro Evolution Soccer* on the PSP has a camera that struggles to keep up with the action and also has some frustrating slowdown.

Don't expect too much from these first footy releases on PSP, as format-specific lessons have to be learnt.

EA has gone for a distant viewpoint to make sure they fit in all the action.

A mindblowing mini-game. You play it longways! Can you get your brain round that?

JUDGEMENT — DAVE

GRAPHICS 82%
All the animation and player likenesses have made it onto the PSP.

GAMEPLAY 58%
It's far too hard to defend and it suffers from the general *FIFA* wooliness.

LIFESPAN 58%
Tons of teams, multi-player options and challenges gives the game longevity.

OVERALL

59%

It's a solid if unspectacular port of the top selling football game.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:..... World Tour Soccer, 61%
WORSE THAN:..... PES 5, 80%
WAIT FOR:..... PES 6, TBC
BEST PRICE:..... £29.99, amazon.co.uk

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: PANDEMIC
• PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS • ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: PC, PS2, XB • WEB: WWW.LUCASARTS.COM • PLAYERS: 1-24 (PS2), 1-34 (XB), 1-64 (PC)

In 'Hunt' mode you have to track down and murder as many of a certain creature as possible. It's your chance to get revenge on Ewoks, Gungans *and* Jawas... at last!

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2

A galaxy of fun squeezed into your hands...

Continuing something of a trend this month (see *X-Men 2: Rise of the Apocalypse* on p.97 for example), *Star Wars Battlefront 2* on the PSP is almost exactly the same as the bigger PS2 and Xbox versions. In fact, it looks to us like a direct port, but with no Story mode. Hardly worth shelling out for, then.

It's still fantastic fun though, if undeniably repetitive. The core of the game was designed for online play, so there are no set-pieces or staged scenes – it's all random, and you're constantly switching character classes and winning/losing parts of the map.

STAR STRUCK

If you're a big *Star Wars* fan, you'll definitely get a big kick out of *Battlefront 2*. Among the planets and levels you can fight across are Endor, Tatooine, the Death Star, Jabba's Palace as well as some new ones from *Star Wars Episode 3*, Utapau, Mygeeto and Mustafar.

Overall, it's a solid, satisfying action game, although we can't help but feel that without the licence, we wouldn't be so lenient with this essentially lazy port. If you hate *Star Wars*, consider something else.

The space battles are new to the *Battlefront* series and they're a real thrill.

JUDGEMENT — ANDY

GRAPHICS 75%
Suffers from typical PSP fuzziness, but still looks better than most.

GAMEPLAY 82%
Exciting capture-the-flag style gameplay and excellent space battles.

LIFESPAN 75%
If you don't have four mates to play over WiFi with, it won't last *that* long.

OVERALL

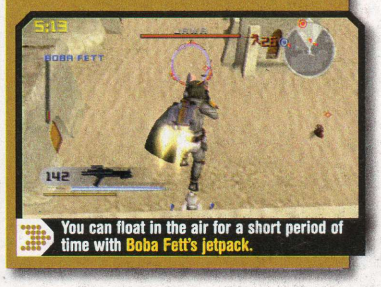
81%

Star Wars fans will grin like idiots, but for the rest of us it's a decent, if flawed, action game.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:..... Untold Legends
WORSE THAN:..... GTA: Liberty City Stories, 90%
ALSO OUT NOW:..... Liberty City Stories,
BEST PRICE:..... £29.99, amazon.co.uk

I NEED A HERO

The best thing about *Battlefront 2* is the ability to play as a number of 'hero' characters. To do so, you have to take enough checkpoints in a level and you can take control of legendary characters including Darth Vader (yes, you can force-choke people), Yoda, Luke Skywalker and even fan-favourite Boba Fett – he's pretty mean with a blaster.



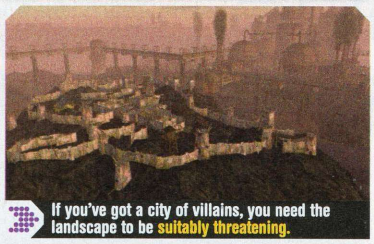
You can float in the air for a short period of time with Boba Fett's jetpack.

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £29.99
DEVELOPER: CRYPTIC • PUBLISHER: NC SOFT • ONLINE: ONLY
OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.CITYOFVILLAINS.COM • PLAYERS: MILLIONS OF 'EM

PC

CITY OF VILLAINS

Mean streets, and they're getting meaner....



If you've got a city of villains, you need the landscape to be suitably threatening.

CAPERS

The customisation is one of the strongest features in *City of Villains*. The character design of *City of Heroes* is expanded, allowing you to add all manner of gubbins to your suit. A new addition is base design, so a supergroup can create a home and defend it against other ones. Yay.

Pressing the 'Random' button in character generation is dangerous – look at this guy.

The Evil cad's secret base: we're poor, so only have a pot-plant of doom for decoration.

Being good is good. Being bad is... well, terribly similar, at first glance. This is the evil twin of Cryptic's previous *City of Heroes*, and works in a very similar way (except with lots more black leather and characters who think a noose of barbed wire is a fashionable accessory).

It's not a bad thing. While you never quite feel openly malicious, there's some fun retro-supervillain romps in this streamlined approach to the online RPG. Where other massively multi-player games are slow, the *Cities* games cut to the chase (i.e. the face punching). And they're all the better for it.

While you can play this by itself happily, it's a nice touch that if you already own *City of Heroes*, your subscription fee will cover this as well.

So while it's a fine start to a career as a villain, it's perhaps better viewed as one of the most glorified expansion packs in gaming history. And there's nothing wrong with that. That's why it's called 'glorified', isn't it?

GM

BEST BIT!

It could be moving around the city, but it's not. It's the hitting. Which is lucky, as you do a lot of it.

You can have real player-versus-player combat, with heroes and villains facing each other off.

GAMES MASTER JUDGEMENT

HIERON

GRAPHICS
Not next-gen, but the cities of villains are an atmospheric, spandex-clad place.

GAMEPLAY
It's almost the same as *City of Heroes*, but that's no bad thing.

LIFESPAN
You may burn out of this online game quickly. Others will be in for a good year.

OVERALL

88%

Either as a starting place or as an expansion pack, *COV* is near the top of its genre.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..... Everquest 2, 79%
WORSE THAN: ..... Guild Wars, 89%
WAIT FOR: ..... Tabla Rasa, TBC
BEST PRICE: ..... £17.99, play.com

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GC • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.NINTENDO.CO.UK • PLAYERS: 1

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

It's *Advance Wars* with a pinch of medieval madness...

Ever played *Advance Wars?* Then you'll feel quite at home with *Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance*. You have a grid for a battlefield and a motley crew of units at your disposal. By taking it in turns with the enemy, you must position your team wisely, using their strengths and weaknesses to defeat an opposing army.

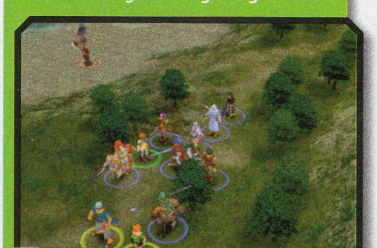
There are a couple of important differences though. *Path of Radiance* plays much more like an RPG, with every defeated enemy giving EXP that can be used to make your characters stronger. The battles themselves are tied together by extensive dialogue – injecting each character with personality and a back-story to help develop the epic tale from humble beginnings, to the climactic final battles.

It's an exceptionally well crafted strategy game. True, it can be a bit ugly in the visual department, but the well written story and the fact that you feel genuinely involved in the action more than makes up for it.

GM

BE STRONG

You can earn bonus EXP which can be spent between battles to level-up weaker units up quickly, or help make stronger units god-like in their battle-dominating awesomeness. Make sure you spread this out as evenly as possible, as later battles are brutal with too many weaklings on your team.



Learn the strengths of your units, and soak in the extensive stats provided for each.

BEST BIT!

You're almost always outnumbered, and seeing your well thought out tactics through to their winning conclusion is immensely satisfying stuff.

GAMES MASTER JUDGEMENT

GERAINT

GRAPHICS
Ugly, badly animated character models. Unusually lush cutscenes though.

GAMEPLAY
Just the same turn-based strategy action as *Advance Wars*. Pretty good then.

LIFESPAN
A huge single player campaign, and it's quite difficult in places too.

OVERALL

91%

As good a turn-based strategy game as you could hope to expect, with a cracking story.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..... Fire Emblem: Sacred Stones, 91%
WORSE THAN: ..... Gladius, 49%
WAIT FOR: ..... It's the last decent strategy game lined up for GC

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99
• DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT • ONLINE: NO
• OTHER FORMATS: GC, XB, PC • WEB: WWW.PRINCEOFPERSIAGAME.COM • PLAYERS: 1

PS2 XBOX GAMECUBE PC

Time Line

Third (and final?) acrobatic adventure of a time-fiddling Prince whose fighting style wouldn't go down badly on *Strictly Come Dancing*.

- Character-switching play and new stealth moves added

Coming Soon

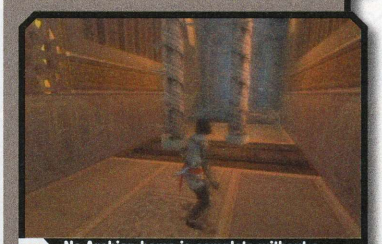
The Dark Prince in action: transform into unused extra from *Tron*, watch health tick down, die.

ROYAL DUTY

Ubisoft only had a year to put *The Two Thrones* together, so it's no surprise that there's little new here except some fresh fighting combos. We'd have preferred to see more of the brain-meddling platforming...

Having learnt how to plank-balance in *Warrior Within*, the Prince does it *all the time*.

Wait for the Dagger Of Time to glow, quickly press ⓞ... oh, we've missed it again.



No Arabian home is complete without a frighteningly spiky rotating pole of death.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

He's in a right royal mess again...

It all starts so well. The Prince's old voice is back, his hair has been sorted out, and he's back to running up walls in the kind of gold-flooded fortresses that made the first *Prince of Persia* so special. *The Two Thrones* looks, for around 74 minutes, like Ubisoft may have found the perfect balance between *Sands of Time* and *Warrior Within*.

Then, suddenly, the Prince transforms into a reject from *Dragonball Z* – he's forced to run about slashing enemies against the clock, thanks to an infuriating auto-decreasing health bar and gets told he's rubbish by a camp, sarcastic voice in his head. Ubisoft: you've messed up.

TIME WILL TELL

Thankfully, the 'Dark Prince' bits and their game-ruining urgency don't crop up too often. But *Prince of Persia* as a whole has become more about timing than time. In many places it's impossible to stop and think your route through in your head. Platforms crumble, columns collapse and zombie dogs steal your precious sand before you've caught your breath.

The Two Thrones really is a bumper box of bad ideas. New Quick Kills taunt you by offering a stealthy way out of *POP's* ever-irritating combat – but if you miss your chance (it's a button-pressing time test), you unleash even *more* enemies. There's even a day/night cycle which makes it too dark to see where you're going when the lights go out.

Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones still has more silky platforming stunnery to offer than most other games. Stringing together a wall-running, pole-swinging combo is breathtaking as ever, and rewinding the clock rocks. But the true magic of *Sands of Time* looks increasingly like it's locked away in the past forever. GM

PRINCE OF DARKNESS

The hateable head-voice in *The Two Thrones* tells the Prince that it was contact with 'The Sand' that gave him his dual personality – after the first few levels, you're drenched in beach dust when Kaileena is murdered. The Dark Prince is much more miffed than his alter ego – every day's a bad hair day – and hauls around a spiked whip he calls a Daggertail, used to lash guards with glowy yellow hurt. It's important to use it: the Dark Prince's health ticks away constantly, so killing enemies and sucking up their sand is the only way to stay alive. Which makes death a regular occurrence.

The Daggertail in action. Enemies are usually clever enough to back right off when they see this.

He can't stand water, that Dark Prince. It morphs you back into Prince No. 1 – rubbish.

JUDGEMENT

MARK

GM LOVES

+ Pristine puzzle-platforming
+ Stealth kills (when they work)
+ Return to golden world

GM HATES

- Infuriating against-the-clock play
- The combat still grates
- Sarky voices in our head

GRAPHICS 82%
They've switched the lights back on! Enjoy the dreamy Arabian atmosphere.

GAMEPLAY 78%
Lots of gratifying room-raiding tempered by clock-racing nightmares.

LIFESPAN 72%
The perfect game for people who really like to unlock concept art.

OVERALL

79%

Lots of annoying, needless new features. In terms of fun, this Prince is becoming a pauper.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..X-Men Apocalypse, 79%
WORSE THAN: ..Prince of Persia: Sands of Time, 86%
WAIT FOR:.....Splinter Cell 4, TBC
BEST PRICE:.....£24.99, play.com

Other Formats

What's it like on your machine?

PC Fewer framerate problems here.
CUBE Combos tougher on the GC joypad.
XBOX The prettiest of the lot.

"THERE'S A DAY/NIGHT CYCLE WHICH MAKES IT TOO DARK TO SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING"

This chariot race is more out of place in the Prince's world than a street-talking fish.

The Prince can't even leap between two stone columns without showing off.

BEST BIT!

When *Prince of Persia* meets *Splinter Cell*: our hero can now slide down narrow gaps – that seem to have been made just for him – and clonk enemies from above.

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £44.99 • DEVELOPER: EA
• PUBLISHER: EA • ONLINE: CIRCUIT, SPRINT, DRAG • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, XB, GC, PC, PSP • WEB: WWW.EAGAMES.COM/OFFICIAL/NFS/MOSTWANTED/US • PLAYERS: 1-8

PS2 XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE PC PSP XBOX 360

Pimp me ride

Can *Most Wanted* on 360 better last month's respectable Xbox score of 82%?

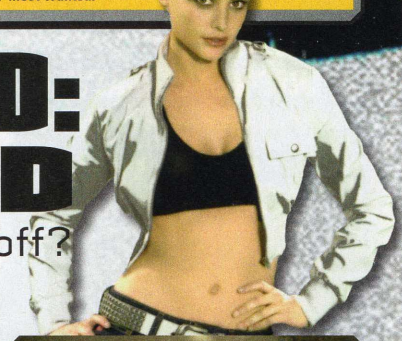
- 36 unlockable rides
- 15 Blacklist baddies to best
- 6 event types

Game play

Our absolute bestest bit of *NFSU2* is always the drag races – and they return for *Most Wanted*.

NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

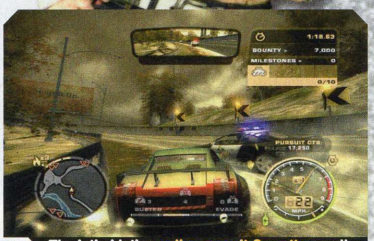
An arresting experience or a total write-off?



Most Wanted; a bravado-packed racer that prides itself on lawlessness and insane speed. Trouble was, for a macho racer all about muscle *it just wasn't fast enough.*

When we saw this and *Burnout: Revenge* in adjacent EA booths in the States last summer, *Most Wanted* looked like a clapped out Cortina up next to *Revenge's* slick Lamborghini. But with the power of 360 injecting its v8 engine with next-gen N2O, the latest in the classic *Need For Speed* series gets a much needed boost of adrenaline. It's still not the most blisteringly quick racer around but it's up there with the best of them.

Play in HD and the sheen emanating from the wet asphalt blinds you, brooding thunderheads roll in before your very eyes, the heavens open and the true beauty of the weather and lighting effects unveils themselves as rival racers and cops litter the screen. You'll be amazed what a bit of extra horsepower can achieve.



The intimidating police pursuit Corvettes spell danger for even the beefiest rides.

SPEED FREAK

It may not boast the insane poly count of *Project Gotham*, but *Most Wanted* is just so edgy, moody and… er, blingy we couldn't help but don our Burberry caps and enter into the chavvy spirit of things. Whereas *Underground* was all neon-lit urban areas, *Most Wanted* delights in run down industrial and rural environments. Even the weather shouts attitude, all thunder, lashing rain and purple skies – this is a racer packing serious heat.

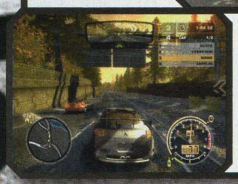
Factor in the extensive modding, varied selection of challenges and the constant thrill of keeping a beady eye out for cop cars and choppers and you can't go wrong with EA's latest. Strictly by the numbers it may be, but *Most Wanted's* impeccable presentation is as polished as its funky bodywork.

Adrenaline junkies everywhere are strongly advised to stick this latest *NFS* right at the head of their *Most Wanted* lists. Word on that. GM

BRAKE TIME

Like most racers, misjudge corners at high speeds and it's spin city for you.

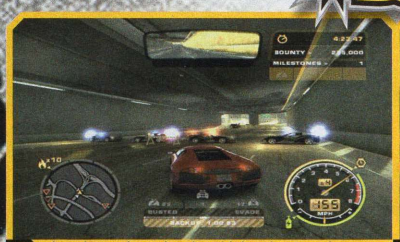
Luckily *Most Wanted* lets you use your Speed Breaker to slow down time…



…so you can swerve out of trouble if you can keep your wits about you.

"IT DELIGHTS IN RUN DOWN ENVIRONMENTS"

BEST BIT!



Imagine owing a Lamborghini and outrunning cops at 200mph through the city streets…

…but don't get too cocky – they'll do *anything* to bust your ass and spoil your fun.

Other formats

The closest alternative on your console:

PS2 XBOX Burnout Revenge 95%
DS Mario Kart.....92%

JUDGEMENT

ROB

GM LOVES

+ Looks stunning in HD
+ More rides than *Auto Trader*
+ Nailing the filth with a Pursuit Breaker

GM HATES

- Tries to be bling, but fails. Miserably.
- We miss *NFSU2's* Outrun Sprints
- Meagre online fare

GRAPHICS

All the gloss of the Xbox version, plus a blistering framerate to (car) boot.

GAMEPLAY

Burnout: Revenge it ain't, but the cops 'n' racers gameplay works a treat.

LIFESPAN

Not as varied as *NFSU2*, but racing against cops, rivals *and* the clock rocks.

OVERALL

86%

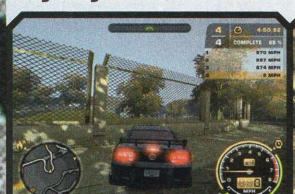
Purists might opt for *Gotham*, but for arcadey petrolheads *Most Wanted* is where it's at.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN:.....NFSU2, 84%
WORSE THAN:.....Burnout: Revenge, 95%
WAIT FOR:.....Vision Gran Turismo, 2007
BEST PRICE:.....£39.99, gameplay.co.uk

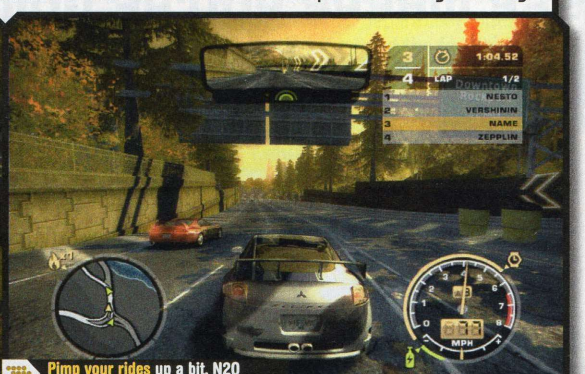
WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE

Petrolheads who whooped like rednecks at the cop chases in *Hot Pursuit* but also loved the modding aspect of *Underground* will be in gaming nirvana, because EA has chucked both games in its special blender and the result is a delicious puree of next-gen beauty.



After your Beemer is nabbed, it's back to bangers for you.

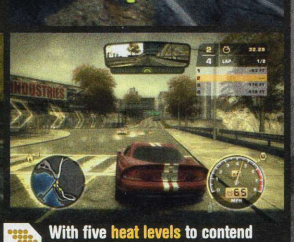
But a few Blacklist races in and the autos improve considerably.



Pimp your rides up a bit, N2O comes highly recommended.

Your rivals rides range from tricked-out coupes to sports cars.

Free-roam mode is far busier than *Need For Speed Underground 2.*



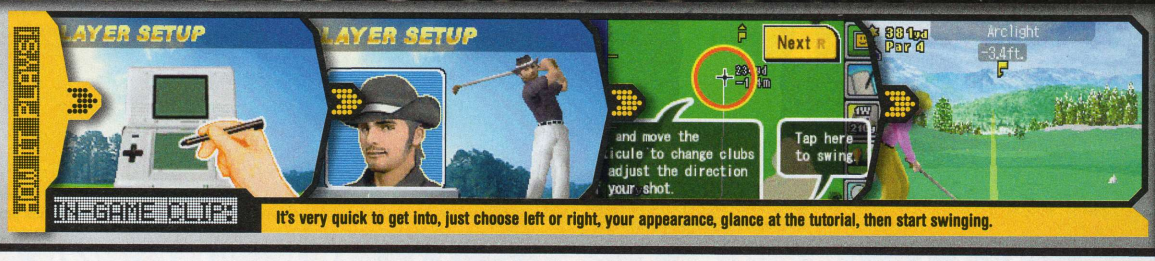
With five heat levels to contend with, chases can get hairy.

- OUT: NOW
- FORMAT: DS
- PRICE: £34.99
- DEVELOPER: T&E SOFT
- PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
- WIFI: MULTI-PLAYER
- OTHER FORMATS: NONE
- WEB: WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM
- PLAYERS: 1-4

What is it?

A great golf game that uses the stylus to replicate the golf swing and does so brilliantly.

- Playable over WiFi for up to four players with only one game cart



It's very quick to get into, just choose left or right, your appearance, glance at the tutorial, then start swinging.

DS.

TOUCH GOLF BIRDIE CHALLENGE

It'll find the swinger in all of us...

The key to a good golf game is making striking the ball satisfying. It's a pleasurable experience, and when it's done sweetly the gamer will get a warm melty feeling inside.

That's the reason why *Tiger Woods* is so great, as you get a genuine sense of pride when you flick that analogue stick forward and the ball explodes off the tee. Well, there's another game that can generate this burst of inner pleasure – *True Swing Golf*. As it's a DS game it's got the stylus and a touchscreen to exploit and it does so superbly. By stroking the bottom screen, you control the head of your chosen club in the back swing, and you follow it up by hitting through the ball. Sounds simple (and that's because it is, and sort of obvious, too) but as it's a sensitive operation there's plenty of opportunity to miss-hit and shank it into the rough. And that's the sign of a brilliant control system – easy to pick up but much harder to master.

Other Formats

The closest alternative on your console:

GBA Mario Golf: Advance Tour – RPG bit might put off those who want to swing their woods..80%

PSP Tiger Woods PGA Golf Tour – Okay, but analogue swing control doesn't convince.....78%

EXPLOSIVE BALLS

The putting is hard, especially as you get no gimmes – you have to putt everything. As for the rest of the presentation, you get an easy to use, straightforward golf game with interesting courses and a comfortable learning curve. Also there's hardly any loading between holes or shots – this is a snappy and never loses sight of the fact that all gamers want to do is strike the ball.

GM

STYLISH...

Using the stylus, you must rest on the club head on the bottom screen. Then, while still making contact with the screen, move it down to build up the necessary power, then send it forward to make contact with the ball.

The quicker and smoother you make the upwards stroke, the faster the club head will be when it makes contact with the ball. Add some top spin to the ball so when it hits the fairway so it rolls for a greater distance. A mix of care and confidence will help you tee off in style.

The top screen has all the conventional views that you'd expect from any golf game.

The bottom screen has all the options you need to change clubs and alter the shot.

PUT WRENCHING

The putting is real challenge, but not because you don't get enough help. Judging the strength of the stroke is key and isn't so easy with the stylus.

The green reader is helpful especially for trying to read the slopes on the green.

The real problem is knowing how hard to strike the ball. You find you'll underhit it at first.

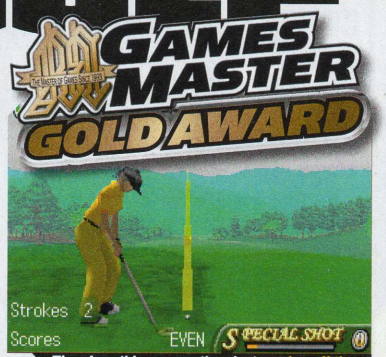
BEST BIT!

As with any golf game, when you absolutely smash one down the middle of fairway, your soul starts to sing. Then relive the joy with the replay.

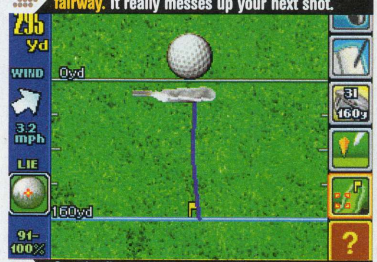
CLUBBING

As with any golf game, there's loads of extra equipment to collect. It's the sport that allows men to really accessorise.

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD



There's nothing worse than just coming off the fairway. It really messes up your next shot.



See the flag at the bottom of the screen? You should be aiming to pull the club down to there.

"THIS GIVES INNER PLEASURE"

GM JUDGEMENT

DAVE

GM LOVES

+ The unpretentious feel of it all
+ The superb use of the stylus
+ The snappy presentation

GM HATES

- The applause sound effects. Always sounds patronising. They give you tap ins. Well tight

GRAPHICS 70%

Not incredible by any means but everything does the job.

GAMEPLAY 93%

Great use of the stylus – simple and effective without seeming gimmicky.

LIFESPAN 70%

Just one course and different pin positions offers loads of fresh fun.

OVERALL

90%

Obvious but excellent use of the stylus makes *True Swing* an outstanding sports game.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN:..... Tiger Woods PGS Tour 2006 PSP, 78%

WORSE THAN: ..Best of its type on the DS

WAIT FOR:.....A Mario DS Golf game

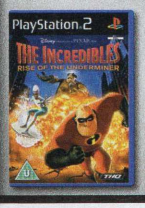
BEST PRICE:.....£25.99, gameplay.co.uk

REVIEW

OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** PS2 • **PRICE:** £29.99 • **DEVELOPER:** HEAVY IRON STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: THQ • **ONLINE:** NO • **SPECIAL:** DROP-IN/OUT TWO-PLAYER MODE
OTHER FORMATS: XB, GC • **WEB:** WWW.THQ.CO.UK • **PLAYERS:** 1-2

PS2 XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE

WHAT'S IT?



The sequel to *The Incredibles*, picking up right where the film left off.

- Simultaneous drop-in-drop-out co-op
- Loads of art and videos to unlock

ROUTE PLANNER

IN GAME BITS You'd best appreciate the fresh air – the first level's the only above ground one in the game...

SNOW JOKE

'"Hey! Bad guys! Freeze!" Ha ha ha... do you see what I've done there? I said freeze, and my powers are all icy, and...'

'"Hey, robo! Chill out!" That's a joke I like to use when I crash my ice-board into a robot's face.'

'Or "ice to see you", that's a good one. And, erm, something about being cool? I've got a list of them somewhere...'

'Erm, hang on... "frost in translation?", "On with the snow?" Why's everyone leaving? Hello?'

THE INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER

This will undermine your intelligence...

As titles go, this one's the most misleading since *The Neverending Story 2 (No, Really, This Time It's Neverending)*. Why? Because Dash, Violet, rubber-girl and devil-baby only appear in the first cutscene and the ending sequence, so the rest of the game you're stuck with Mr. Incredible – singular – and Frozone. *Incredibles?* Right.

Not that this is necessarily a bad thing. Instead of flicking between family members, gameplay now includes both heroes on-screen every step of the way, teaming up to freeze and smash things and... well, that's about it. In single-player, a flick of the D-pad changes which one you're controlling, allowing you to tackle spinny things (freeze them) and doors (smash them) with ease. The trouble is, the designers seem to think that if something's worth doing, it's worth doing again and again, so every bit of even vaguely clever game design's smothered by repetition.

FREEZY RIDER

Building one ice bridge while sewer-bots fling gunge at you is fun – doing it six times quickly sucks all the joy out of things. Freezing and smashing one boss-bot is okay – fighting another 60 identical robots (that have to be tackled in exactly the same way) is not. By the finale of the game, you're still doing exactly the same things you were doing at the start, only with slightly quicker freeze-powers and a fractionally stronger punch. This isn't made any easier by the fact that, although the computer can defend itself, it won't ever solve puzzles properly, so you're forced to shuffle between the characters freezing and throwing things while repeatedly getting shot at.

With two players it's a bit more fun – and a whole lot easier – but still pretty far short of incredible. GM

"EVERY BIT OF EVEN VAGUELY CLEVER GAME DESIGN IS SMOTHERED BY REPETITION"

WHEN ROBOTS ATTACK

The closest alternatives on your console:

CUBE Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction...82%
XBOX Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects.....48%

Get used to seeing these robots – there are only about seven types of enemy in the game.

Mr Incredible can't lift anything bigger than this plastic barrel. We could probably do that.

Doing Mr Incredible's screen-clearing mega-punch. When the tedium gets too much, it makes everything die quick-sharp.

THE DYNAMIC DUO

Mr Incredible and Frozone can't actually interact with each other – so no punching/freezing your friends – but they can team up. Well, sort of. There's basically one combination that you'll spend the entire game using – let's hope you can get the hang of that, eh?

Frozen can freeze things, which slows them down enough for Mr Incredible to smash them.

Frozen can also freeze incoming projectiles, which you can throw back at robots.

And – yes – you can freeze robots, then throw them at other robots... and smash them. Yawn.

JUDGEMENT

GM LOVES

+ Frozone's upgraded snow-surf move – it's sort of like the film
+ Making up stupid snow puns
+ Playing with friends

GM HATES

- Playing alone
- Doing exactly the same thing 17 times

GRAPHICS 50%
Nicely animated, but there isn't exactly a heap of variety to the backgrounds.

GAMEPLAY 50%
Freeze! Smash! Freeze! Smash! It gets old and repetitive pretty fast.

LIFESPAN 50%
A measly four hours, and was when we weren't even really trying.

OVERALL

50%

It may keep youngsters quiet for a while, but anyone over seven will tire of this quickly.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:..... Spike Out, 45%
WORSE THAN: Ultimate Spider-Man, 80%
WAIT FOR:..... City Of Villains, December
BEST PRICE:.....£29.99, amazon.co.uk

LOCK AND LOAD...
DOOM RPG IS HERE.

"You Must Experience This Game"
WG WORLD RATING 5/5

"Superbly Playable"
"A Fresh Experience For Mobile"
"Hugely Recommended"
IGN RATING 9.0/10

FOUNTAINHEAD ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

WWW.DOOMRPGMOBILE.COM

SEE DOOM THE MOVIE
IN CINEMAS DECEMBER 2, 2005.

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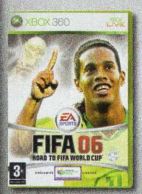
OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £44.99
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA • PUBLISHER: EA • ONLINE: VERSUS, LEADERBOARD
OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.EASPORTS.COM/GAMES/FIFA06 • PLAYERS: 1-4

XBOX 360

What is it?



Try to ensure your fave national side qualifies for Deutschland 2006 in next-gen *FIFA*.

- 72 teams
- 1,700 players
- 9 different stadia

Your Call

Game Over

The Swiss and Turks contest number of punches landed, not goals scored. Allegedly.

Other Formats

The closest alternative on your console:

PSP DS GBA FIFA 06 ..... 69%
PS2 XBOX PC Pro Evo Soccer 5 ..... 96%

FIFA 06
ROAD TO FIFA WORLD CUP

The road to ruin more like...

In LA last May we had the pleasure to endlessly replay the E3 *FIFA* free-kick tech demo, blissfully ignorant of the drool on our chins as we dreamt of Xbox 360's December launch. Seven months on, our tans have faded and our dreams have been shattered. Life can be cruel sometimes...

In the cold light of day, *FIFA's* dated, wooly gameplay on the 360 feels even more of a slap in the face than usual. Control is sluggish, AI utterly clueless and the air will turn blue with increasingly inventive swear words with as their sloppy efforts are repeatedly intercepted.

BORE DRAW

Just when you think they've drifted into a position where you'll be able to thread through a delicately weighted through pass, they'll check their run at the last minute. Thanks a lot, team.

If passing the ball around with fluidity is painfully tricky, hitting the back of the net is something else. It's now almost impossible to score through the middle, thanks to a woeful lack of pace or invention by your front men. Long shots have undergone a similar reincarnation. In the past it was all too easy to bang one in from a distance, but nowadays the same technique is near impossible.

The same goes for scoring in general – you'll experience way too many bore draws, even on default difficulty. As per usual, your 'tactics' often boil down to banging in as many crosses as possible and relying on (frequent) lapses by *FIFA's* daft custodians.

One thing that did catch our eye was the new on-the-fly strategic options, managed intuitively through a tap of the D-pad. But stellar *06* features like *FIFA* Lounge, Career and Manager modes have also been ripped out. Although you *can* kick the ball around in some dungeon-like setting during the painfully extended loading times. Now that's what we call progress. Other 'innovations' include whittling down *FIFA 06's* 10,000 players to a mere 1,700 this time around.

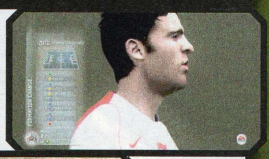
FIFA PITCH

If you can get your head around the fact that the vast majority of players resemble grotesque, fevered caricatures of their real-life selves, *FIFA* looks gorgeous. But on the default dynamic camera angle all of the next-gen impact goes AWOL while the frame rate on close-ups and replays is massively laggy.

Light on teams, light on features and painfully light on gameplay, *Road to FIFA World Cup* is an insult to our national game.

GM

NEW AGE



Tinkering with formations/tactics/subs on the fly is a smart addition.

Some of the animation is far too over-the-top but occasionally it really is world class.

Curiously (probably to show off the next-gen turf), pitch grass is really long.

Free kicks are much harder to 1. win and 2. score from than previous *FIFAs*.

"THIS IS LIGHT ON TEAMS, LIGHT ON FEATURES AND PAINFULLY LIGHT ON GAMEPLAY"

JUDGEMENT

GM LOVES

+ Spectacular highlights system
+ Stunning commentary
+ Big match atmosphere

GM HATES

- Where to start? Lack of game modes, poor selection of teams, feeble gameplay... urgh
- The players all have cardboard boxes for heads

GRAPHICS 360

Everything jerks – quite literally – between the sublime and the ridiculous.

GAMEPLAY 360

Insipid and infuriating. This isn't even current-gen standard, let alone next-gen.

LIFESPAN 360

Where has the *FIFA* Lounge gone? What about Career or Manager modes?

OVERALL

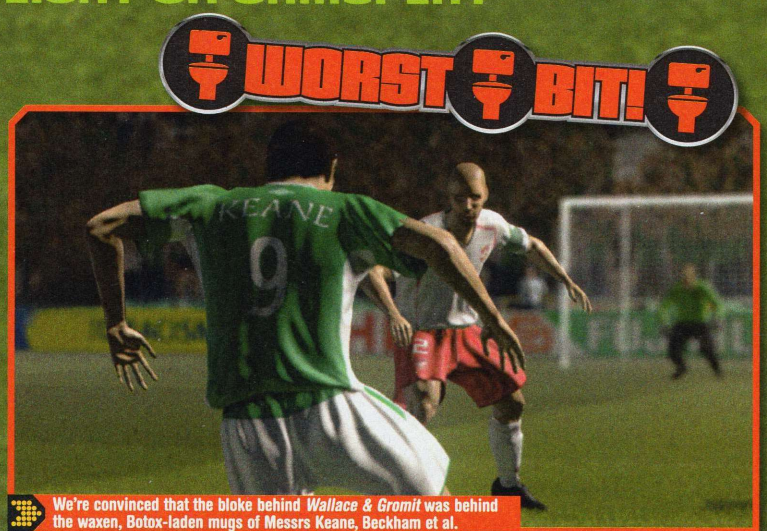
59%

Football? This is just plain balls. As lacklustre a *FIFA* as *GM* can remember.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

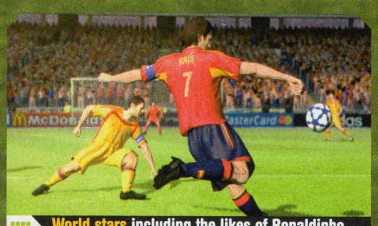
BETTER THAN: ..... Shin Splints
WORSE THAN: ..... PES 5, 96%
WAIT FOR: ..... A *proper* next-gen FIFA
BEST PRICE: ..... £39.99, amazon.co.uk

WORST BIT!



We're convinced that the bloke behind *Wallace & Gromit* was behind the waxen, Botox-laden mugs of Messrs Keane, Beckham et al.

Hans Moleman, also known as Sven Goran Erickson, has been amusingly rendered.

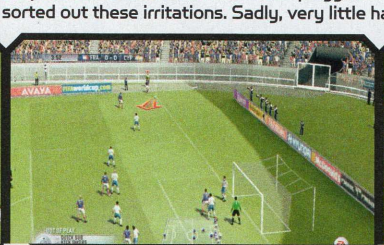


World stars including the likes of Ronaldinho, Rooney and Raul are ace on the pitch.

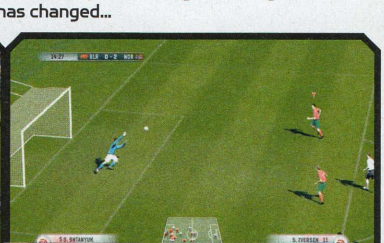
STALE SOCCER

FIFA 06 was much maligned for its shoddy set pieces, AI akin to chaotic school playground match ups and soft goalscoring methods. So you'd think *Road to FIFA World Cup* has sorted out these irritations. Sadly, very little has changed...

Officials either stay rooted to the spot like in this shot or are annoyingly flap happy.



Road to FIFA World Cup's weak set pieces are largely of the 'hit and hope' variety.



The goal keepers' repertoires consist only of this 'spectacular' palm away.

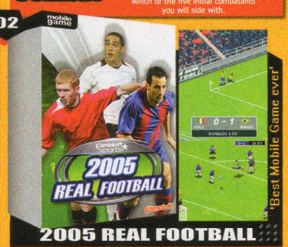
Mobile Games

01

MEDIEVAL COMBAT

Combat

Medieval Combat: Age of Glory plunges you into the heart of fantastical medieval mythology. Demons or humans, it is up to you to choose which of the five initial combatants you will side with.

02


2005 REAL FOOTBALL

Soccer

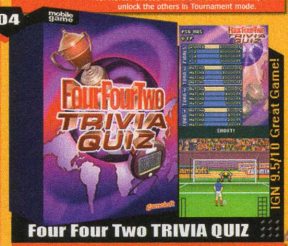
2005 Real Football puts you at the helm of one of 32 national teams or one of 16 prestigious clubs in 5 varied game modes (Quickplay, Exhibition, Cup, League and Training). Thanks to the FIFPRO license, the game also features real-life players.

03

MIDNIGHT POOL

Pool

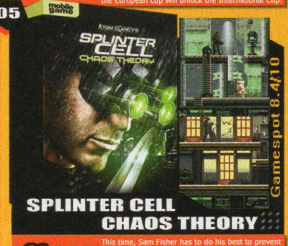
Midnight Pool™ brings you into the competitive universe of a genuine American pool hall. You will face 8 original players, none of whom are ever at a loss for words! Choose from 3 available characters, then unlock the others in Tournament mode.

04


Four Four Two TRIVIA QUIZ

Trivia

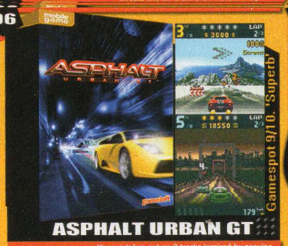
FourFourTwo Trivia Quiz offers you the chance to test your knowledge in the ultimate football quiz on mobile! Start off with the National Cup. Winning this title will unlock the European Cup, and a victory at the European cup will unlock the International Cup!

05


SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

Chaos

This time, Sam Fisher has to do his best to prevent a potentially explosive new World War in the Pacific. Using Stealth moves, you can hide even closer to your enemies, grab guards to cut their throats and kill them even more silently.

06


ASPHALT URBAN GT

Urban

You are taken out on 8 tracks inspired by genuine places. Each track is part of a specific graphic universe and includes different tunnels and elevations that enable you to perform impressive jumps among other things.

To order a game just text the Item Code to 60111 eg. to order Asphalt Urban GT text Urban to 60111

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Wing Chun Master

ATTACK3 — MICHAEL WONG, Tai Chi Combat

DEADLY ATTACKS

ATTACK5 — NEIL ADAMS MBE, Olympian

Some of the techniques shown: How to defend yourself and attack when the fight goes to the ground. Brazilian Jiu Jitsu World Champion shows you how its all done.

ATTACK4 — DAVE O'DONNEL, Cage Rage Mixed Martial Arts

Some of the techniques shown:
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Defence Against Jab & Rear Hook
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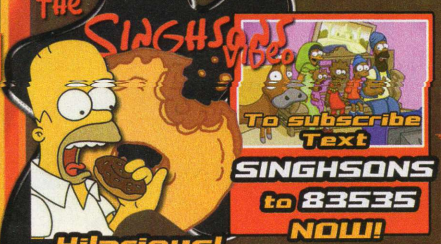

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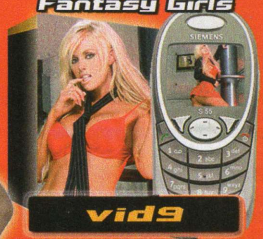
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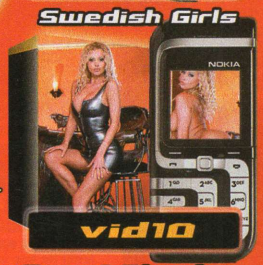
Swedish Girls

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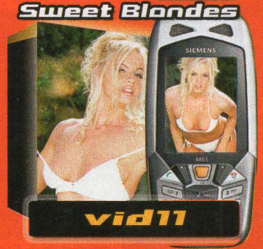
Sweet Blondes

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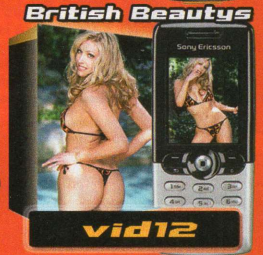
British Beautys

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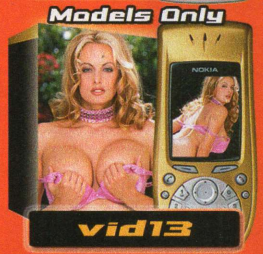
Models Only

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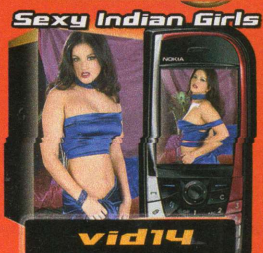
Sexy Indian Girls

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Fun at the Pool Party

vid15

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OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99
DEVELOPER: LUXOFLUX • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION • ONLINE: NO
OTHER FORMATS: XB, GC • WEB: HTTP://WWW.TRUECRIME.COM/ • PLAYERS: 1

THE LOWDOWN

Follow up to a mildly successful original, this time the plot has been ramped up.

- An 80 song strong soundtrack
- You have the 25 mile city of Manhattan to

SCREENSHOTS

IN GAME PLOT: Resolving hostage situations like these requires tact, diplomacy and some tricky negotiation. Or just shoot them.

TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

Something's rotten in the Big Apple...

In Luxoflux's New York you need to know your rights from your wrongs. On these mean streets policemen don't give young crims a clip round the ear, they put a bullet in the brain. For the NYPD, Habeus Corpus is just a greasy old pimp from the Latino district.

Which is handy for our gangsta turned corn-rowed coppa Marcus Reed, as he can nab any car, batter any citizens and pistol whip any perp he doesn't like the look of. So while his aim is to clean up Manhattan through a mixture of set missions and random but novel street crimes, he can still leer at strippers, push packages of drugs and smash up shops.

NYPD BLUES

What's more, this can all be done safe in the knowledge that being a Bad Lieutenant won't prevent the branching plot from unfolding. Because unlike the original game, even if you accidentally beat a suspect to death, there is always another way to get the info.

But while this free-form approach allows you rampage around darkest corners of this immense litter-

CRIME WAVED

Each part of the city has its own crime levels, and the more you ignore them, the more it rises.

So as you drive through an area a number of random events occur, and it is up to you to solve them.

Most involve breaking up fights between gangs, restaurant goers or bums but the situations vary.

There is a bomb in this room and it needs to be defused, fast. Can you spot it?

It isn't really swimming but Marcus can just about doggy paddle his way across rivers.

BEST BIT!

After the flat featureless L.A., New York is a huge, fascinating sprawl. It might not be packed with interesting places to visit but all kinds of pond life is here.

COPS AND SHOPS

Money can get you anything you need, or don't need. All you need to do is drive around town looking for the garages, gun shops or music stores.

Nick guns from the dead, or buy them if you've got morals.

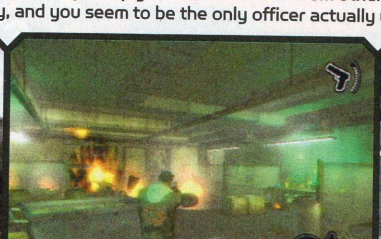
Buy tunes from the music shop and add the to the soundtrack.

Food replenishes your energy, as does going for a short drive.

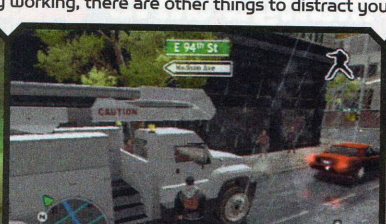
LAW AND ORDERS

In the now standard *Grand Theft Auto* style you can pick up your main missions from other officers and by solving major crimes – usually by killing everyone. But since the crime rate is constantly rising across the city, and you seem to be the only officer actually working, there are other things to distract you downtown, too.

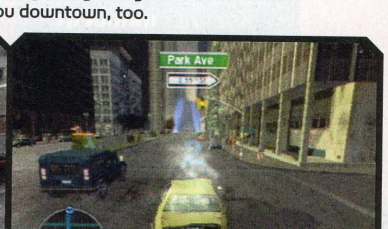
In the search and destroy missions the body count matters more than collars felt.



Evidence also needs to be collected, which can then be swapped for hard cash.



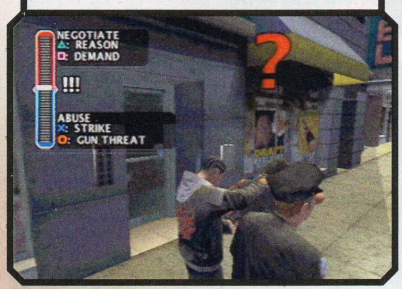
The jobs do feel very mundane compared to *GTA's* outlandish, inventive and silly missions.



And where would any big city be without an illegal late night racing society?

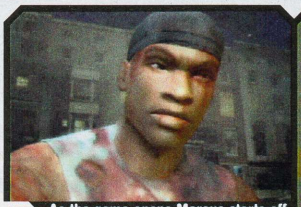
GREEN GRASS

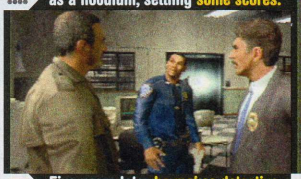
As a cop you get to shoot first and ask questions later, as every mission ends with a bloodbath and then an interrogation. Getting the perp to spill the beans is a simple matter of bullying them until they talk. You can't fail, but we did to see what happens if you do.

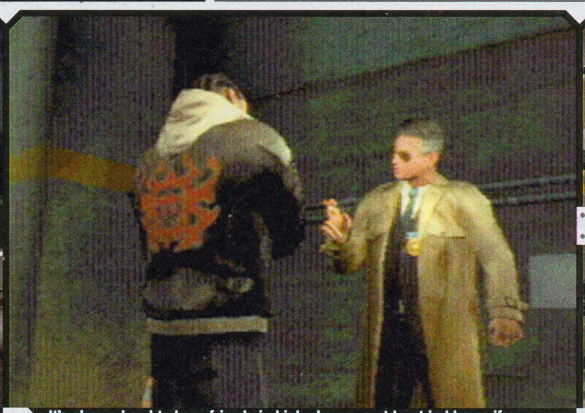


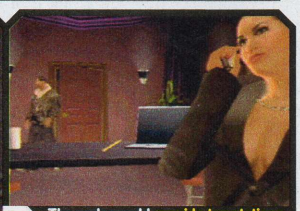
POISONED APPLE

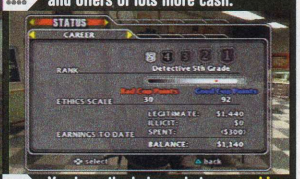
One apple at the core of the Big Apple has gone bad, and your job is to upset the apple cart, and root out this maggot.


As the game opens Marcus starts off as a hoodlum, settling some scores.


Five years later he makes detective and sets out to kill more people.


It's always hand to have friends in high places, or at least in blue uniforms. Your mates from the force provide information and your main missions.


The underworld provide temptations and offers of lots more cash.



You keep the balance between making cash and keeping Marcus honest.

strewn city, the action has a plodding, pedestrian feel. So while our hero might look like Snoop, this flatfoot actually moves and shoots like someone with something Biggie in their Smalls: he can't run without an upgrade, his bullet-dodging-dive is more a belly-flop and cycling through the weapons wastes precious seconds. Likewise, the cars seem to have blancmange under the bonnet, making them wallow rather than power-slide.

Which might all be major problems if the game wasn't so generous with health packs, easy interrogations, and the hordes of dumb criminals. So while you *can* spend all of your ill-gotten or honestly earned dollars on upgrades to your combat skills, you don't need too. Instead from the first foe to the last boss, cop killers stand stock still as you and the auto-aim fill them with lead. Brawling bums can be battered into submission just by pressing the punch button first and fastest.

DISORGANISED CRIME

But those aren't the only problems that take a flamethrower to the polish that Luxoflux have layered on via the top quality cast, big name soundtrack and the feast of side missions. Because although the Big Apple sprawls and crawls for mile after mile of beautifully detailed concrete, this PS2 version has traded its visual glitz for the framerate that gloops and drips like custard through a sieve.

While these small pieces of evidence don't quite convict *True Crime: NYC*, they do sentence it to becoming just another *Grand Theft Also*, much improved over the original game but somehow just not different or distinctive enough to win over this jury. GM

Other Formats

The closest alternatives on your console:

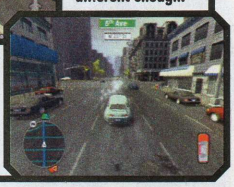
PSP	GTA: Liberty City Stories	90%
CUBE	Spider-Man 2	90%
XBOX	GTA San Andreas	98%

CITY LIVING

At 25 square miles, the city is huge and busy all day and all night with people, cars and lights.

The handling of the cars isn't that sharp and the bikes don't feel different enough.

But once you find a fast car the framerate slows and the pop-up gets serious.



"THE FRAMERATE GLOOPS AND DRIPS LIKE CUSTARD FROM A SIEVE"

Since driving across it can take 15 minutes, taking a cab is a really smart move.

Don't worry, you will survive this. Honestly, cops in New York are that hard.

JUDGEMENT

ALEX

GM LOVES

+ So many novel side missions
+ NY is one of the biggest cities around
+ The lack of the original's ghosts and Chinese ghouls

GM HATES

- Not a feast of original ideas
- Vocal glitches can leave the lip sync lagging
- The loading times are pretty hefty

GRAPHICS 72%

The city is big and busy but the price has been paid in frames.

GAMEPLAY 80%

There are very few new features but it is a slow and solid experience.

LIFESPAN 80%

Controlling the rising crime rate adds months to what would be a few days' play.

OVERALL

72%

A big story, but at its core nasty pop-up and slow play allow others to pip it.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

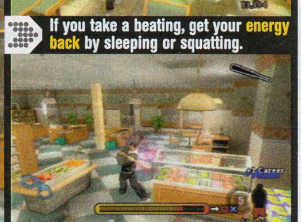
BETTER THAN: ..... The Getaway 2 ..... Black Monday, 71%
WORSE THAN: ..... GTA San Andreas, 98%
WAIT FOR: ..... Saint's Row, December
BEST PRICE: ..... £29.99, amazon.co.uk

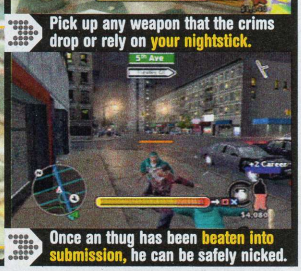
ASBO SELECTA

Killing everyone in the city might work to lower the crime rate, but sometimes you really need to make sure at least one or two of your collars survive the carnage.

Vandals in shops need to first be shown your badge and then your fists.

If you take a beating, get your energy back by sleeping or squatting.

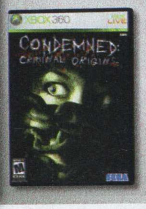

Pick up any weapon that the crims drop or rely on your nightstick.


Once an thug has been beaten into submission, he can be safely nicked.

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS
PUBLISHER: SEGA • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: HTTP://CONDEMNEDGAME.COM • PLAYERS: 1

XBOX 360

THE BIG IDEA



The most unpleasant investigate-'em-up ever. Think *Seven* meets *Saw* in a sausage meat factory.

- More than 10 types of blunt instrument
- Evidence collection mini-games

IN-GAME PLOT

Faceless babies, disfigured mannequins and mangled corpses. This is why we don't move to the big city.

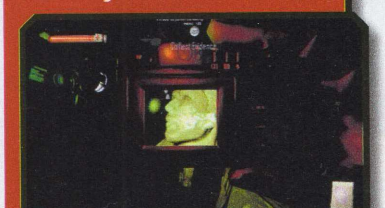
CONDEMNED

18

Should this celebration of horribleness be condoned?

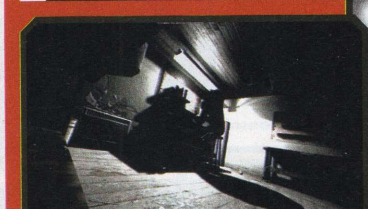
FOREN-SICK

Fingerprinting? Interrogations? Forget them – all you need's some forensic kit.



Firstly, you scan everything for 'prints' and 'latents' and things like that.

Then you can hoover up samples and send them to the DNA lab for analysis.



Then forget the whole thing and use your psi-powers to work out who the murderer is.

OTHER ANIMALS

The closest alternative on your console:

PS2	Silent Hill 4: The Room	72%
CUBE	Super Mario Sunshine	95%
PC	The Suffering	80%

There's nothing like being in Evidence Collection mode when a shock happens. Eek!

Tazers might seem unsporting, but then some chancer turns up with a big old gun.

What's that? Pass the ketchup? Ahahaha! Ah, crime scene humour. We just love it.

When did games get this unpleasant, eh? It was only a couple of years ago that we were saving up magical gold doubloons to buy a unicorn made of marshmallows and happy thoughts. But now we're smashing tramps' heads in with nail-studded bats and stuffing dead birds in our pockets. No, seriously – they count as *bonus points*.

So: if you're the sort who thought *Silent Hill* was a bit short on vicious pipe-beatings, then *Condemned's* going to be right up your urine-stained alley. It's all thanks to the brilliant atmospherics – those tramps snarl, sprint, rip things off walls, knock things over and swing wild backhands even after you've cracked them across the face with a hammer. They lurk and hide in the shadows, dash across your line of vision and knock things over, but you're never sure where the next attack's going to come from.

GRIM CITY

There's hardly a bit of the game that *isn't* set in a crime scene, crackhouse or squat, and the entire experience is designed and lit to maximise the creepiness. A desperate shortage of ammo makes every fight feel desperate, and a compelling plot keeps the action moving forward at a swift pace.

In fact, it's only when you actually have to *play* the game that things start to fall apart – melee combat has none of the meatiness of *Halo's* collisions, and quickly gets repetitive. Exploration can be tedious, and the unrelenting darkness means that every puzzle solution has to be virtually handed to you on a plate. In the daylight it seems almost tiresome – but play it in a darkened room, and you'll squeal more than once as the increasingly nasty set-pieces unfold. And that beats unicorn-collecting any day… GM

With careful timing, it's possible to convince once-peaceful hobos to fight each other.

IF I HAD A HAMMER...

You can only carry one weapon at a time and ammo's like gold dust, but *Condemned* has more blunt instruments than the London Philharmonic. Each has its advantages – short pipes are quick but weak, long pipes are slow but strong, bats with nails in are good for hurting people and bats with bolts in are good for your defending yourself. And some, like axes or sledgehammers, are necessary to open doors. Thwomp!

Blocking takes keen timing with heavy weapons – and some enemies will feint attacks, too.

Note: lots of homeless people are dead nice. This is not socially acceptable behaviour.

No, he's not getting up. And ammo's too scarce to make sure – best give him a quick butting.

"THE ENTIRE EXPERIENCE IS DESIGNED AND LIT TO MAXIMISE THE CREEPINESS"

BEST BIT!

When things get tight, you can taser Beardy Jim in the face as a prelude to shattering his cheekbones with a mallet. Bzzt!

JUDGEMENT

JOEL

GM LOVES

- Bashing street scruffs with a fire axe. No, wait, that sounds wrong
- The genuinely unpleasant atmosphere

GM HATES

- The slightly flimsy collisions
- Trying hundreds of identical doors to find the one that works

GRAPHICS 82%
Chilling animations and grim backgrounds. Good, in a horrible way.

GAMEPLAY 75%
A bit repetitive, but it makes a change from shooting people all the time.

LIFESPAN 78%
Ten ruthlessly unpleasant hours, and then you'll never want to play it again.

OVERALL

80%

Brilliantly realised atmosphere covers up shaky gameplay – but still excellent stuff.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

AS GOOD AS: ..... The Suffering: Ties That Bind, 80%
WORSE THAN: ..... Silent Hill 4, 72%
WAIT FOR: ..... The Silent Hill film
BEST PRICE: ..... £29.99, amazon.co.uk

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GC • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
• ONLINE: NONE • SPECIAL: MICROPHONE • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.NINTENDO.COM • PLAYERS: 1-8

WHAT IS IT?

The seventh in Mario's spin-off party series and this time Bowser's all upset because nobody invited him on Mario's special cruise. We understand your pain, big man.

- More than 60 mini-games

GAME BIT

Pass The Bomb reels with sickening tension, a bit like the horror film *Saw 2* but with toadstools.

MARIO PARTY 7

The one where Bowser *won't leave...*

You know how if you go to a party but don't know anyone, it actually makes you *lonelier* than sitting at home on your own because everybody else is having a good time and it makes you feel like a loser? *Mario Party 7's* a bit like that.

Amazingly, even after *seven* instalments Nintendo still hasn't put in an option to fast-forward the computer players' turns. So you'll spend at least half of the solo game watching Toad mess about in the orb shop and pretend that he's got a chance of losing one of the mini-games, while you sit there miserably wishing you had some friends to talk to.

And none of it makes a difference anyway, because you *still* get the feeling that the computer's doing whatever it likes – sometimes it'll make tactical decisions that'd embarrass Field Marshall Haig, other times it'll magically keep rolling tens and land on all the right squares. Great.

GATE CRASHER

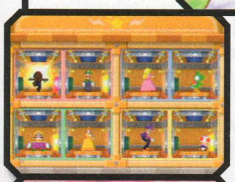
Party 7 is not designed for solo players. With four – or even eight – friends, the action's better. But games still take hours to plod through, and some massively arbitrary rulings, like the get-all-your-coins-hoovered-away square, will make you want to cry.

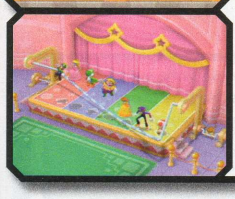
Oh, and the party mic returns, but only as part of an annoying fruit-remembering mini-game that'd work just as well without it. Still, it's better than waking up with Mario passed out on your sofa. GM

"YOU SIT THERE MISERABLY WISHING YOU HAD FRIENDS"

OCTO-PARTY!

Ingeniously, it's possible for eight people to play Mario party's mini-games simultaneously – using half of the pad each and each getting their own analogue stick/shoulder button.





These mini-games tend to be over in about three seconds flat – some of them are a genuine test of skill, but others are almost completely random.

Fan, Wario, fan! Actually, this game is good – a bit like interactive snakes and ladders.

The level design is nicely themed – this one sort of reminds us of various kung fu films.

WORST BIT!

You've been playing for half an hour, then you land on the wrong square and Bowser challenges you to win at a completely random game or you *lose half your coins*. Mercy.

GAME FOR A LAUGH?

There are several types of mini-game in *Mario Party 7*, and which one you get depends on the square you land on. They're broken down into Dual games (player vs player), solo games (player vs Nintendo characters), mic games (rubbish things where you have to 'say' your answers instead of pressing a button) and Bowser games (annoying ones that steal all your coins). Here they are, then...

Duel Battles get both players involved, and minimise miserably-holding-the-joypad time.

Watching a computer player 'compete' with Donkey Kong: as much fun as watching paint dry.

'Grape. Grrr-aaaape. Gr-a-p-e.' Jesus Christ, why did I bet my whole stash of coins on this?

JUDGEMENT

GM LOVES

+ A good eight-player session
+ The skill-based mini-games

GM HATES

- Watching Toad mess about for 10 minutes while you wait for a go...
- Then rolling a 1 and not doing anything before he starts all over again

GRAPHICS 75%

Lovely. Bouncy, bright and well animated. Well done, Nintendo.

GAMEPLAY 30%

Some games don't involve any skill at all, and the computer cheats.

LIFESPAN 50%

There's absolutely loads in there, but it's all a bit hit and miss.

OVERALL

55%

If you make a *Mario Party 8*, Ninty, include a setting so we don't have to watch the computer.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: ....Shrek Super Party, 63%
WORSE THAN: ..... Wario Ware, 90%
WAIT FOR: ..... A real party
BEST PRICE: ..... £29.99, amazon.co.uk

Other Formats

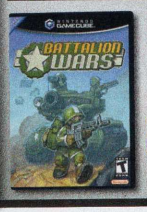
The closest alternative on your consoles:

PS2 Buzz: The Music Quiz.....80%

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GC • PRICE: £34.99
DEVELOPER: KUJU • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO • ONLINE: NO
OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.NINTENDO.CO.UK • PLAYERS: 1

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

THE LOWDOWN



Take control of a small army and use your wits and reflexes to lead them to victory on the battlefield.

- Command a huge range of soldiers and vehicles

IN-GAME BITS

Each and every mission spans sprawling terrain, with multiple objectives to achieve...

BATTALION WARS

Give a warm welcome to Nintendo's new model army...

Take one half *Pikmin*, another half *Command and Conquer*, with perhaps a dash of *Worms* and a sprinkling of *Cannon Fodder* thrown in for good measure – there's a whole lot of everything in *Battalion Wars*, a real mix of influences – and somehow, it pulls it off astonishingly well.

GROUND ZERO

It's best described as a real-time strategy game that's played at ground level. You have the usual mix of unit types, including foot soldiers, tanks, jeeps and planes. You can set them destinations or specific enemy units to attack. However, before you put it down as a straightforward RTS, there's a little more to it than that.

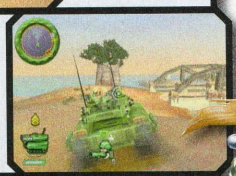
You see, you can control each unit directly. One minute you're filling the shoes of a Bazooka unit and taking aim at an approaching Tank yourself. The next, you're charging through barbed wire in a Heavy Tank, or scattering enemy riflemen like as you hover above them in a powerful gunship.

What makes it so unique, so refreshing, is this element of choice. You have a battlefield peppered with pockets of enemy units, a handful of primary and secondary objectives, but how you go about taking them out is up to you. Are

TAKE CHARGE

Every unit in *Battalion Wars* is yours to command – letting you target and destroy enemies for a greater degree of control.

You can set way-points for your men and vehicles to follow on their own, and command them to attack or defend certain areas.



One tactic is to jump from unit to unit as and when you need them. By doing this, you have complete control over their actions.

Or you can choose a vehicle, and simply issue specific commands, letting you co-ordinate multiple attacks at the same time.

BEST BIT!

Things get unbelievably hectic – you really feel like you're being bombarded at all angles but, crucially, you always feel in control.

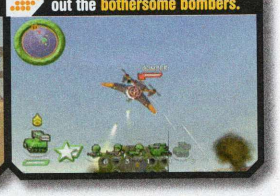
HOLD THE FORT

There's a massive variation in the kinds of missions you need to complete – some require you to attack specific targets or hole up in a fort and weather the storm.

In this mission, you start with a solitary vehicle. You need to meet up with the rest of your force.

Position your men in the gun turrets outside the base.

Heavy artillery can help soften up the advancing enemy.



Use these anti-air guns to take out the bothersome bombers.

SCISSORS PAPER STONE

Like all good strategy games, part of the challenge comes from knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your army before applying specific units against certain enemies – it works in exactly the same way here...

Nailed 'im! And it looks like he left a MEDI-PACK behind! You can grab these for yourself, otherwise your Grunts will pick 'em up as necessary.
AMMO DUMP

The bog-standard grunt – these units are great at whittling down infantry from long range.

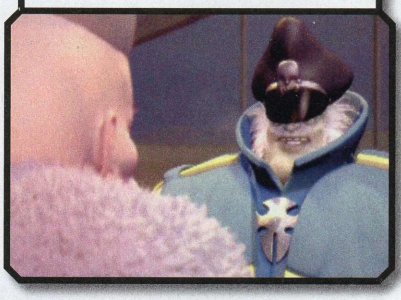
Flame Vets are your first port of call against enemy foot-soldiers but not tanks.

The Bazooka vets are perfect against heavily armoured units like Tanks and Artillery.

Rocket vets are good for air defence, but stand little chance against the more standard riflemen.

ACHTUNG!

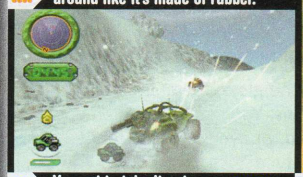
Battalian Wars isn't shy with the stereotypes. From the Arnie-like, vampiric 'German' Commander Ubel, to the dizzy 'American', Nell, you'll be snorting your cup of tea out of your nose and over your joypad on more than one occasion...



TANKS ALOT

One of the best things about *Battalion Wars* is how differently the vehicles handle – each as much fun to drive as the next...

The Light Recon jeep bounces around like it's made of rubber.



You get to take it out on an escape run around this mountain pathway.

Later vehicles, like the Light and Heavy Tanks are slow to move, but are great for pounding enemy lines with their awesome cannons.

These long-range artillery units are more specialised vehicles.

Anti-Air guns fire away rockets as though they're going out of fashion.

"WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE IS THIS ELEMENT OF CHOICE"

you a hands-on kind of guy, intent on doing the dirty work of controlling and firing off weapons yourself? Or do you prefer to stand back and command from a single unit?

NICE N EASY

Whatever you decide, actually *doing* it is made very easy through a surprisingly intuitive control system. With so much going on at any given time, you expect things to be confusing – it isn't. The lock on system makes aiming a breeze and selecting and commandeering units in your army is never more than a few button presses away. The icing on the cake, though, is the fact that even though it has taken a completely different direction from the much loved GBA series, the overall cheeky atmosphere, toy-like feel, and hard-boiled strategy roots of it's predecessors have not been diluted. In this respect, it's a worthy addition to the *Wars* series, and more than deserving of your time and money.

GM

Other Contents

The closest alternative on your console:

XBOX	Conflict Global Storm	89%
PS2	Battle Engine Aquila	87%
CUBE	Pikmin	90%

UP AND AWAY

The gunships are deadly against ground-based armoured units – great for wreaking havoc amongst enemy tanks.

The slow bomber can wipe out entire bases and armoured columns.

Fast and agile, Fighters are kings of the air, making light work of any enemy bombers and gunships.

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

These flags often need to be protected. Surround them with the bulk of your force.

It pays too leave more fragile units behind. Calling on them when you need them most.

JUDGEMENT

GERAINT

GM LOVES

+ Intuitive controls
+ The chunky, toy-like feel
+ It's a very original and unique little strategy game

GM HATES

- There's no multi-player
- Targeting can sometimes be a bit fiddly

GRAPHICS 90%

Huge battlefields, well modelled units, lovely explosions and on-screen action.

GAMEPLAY 90%

Strikes a perfect balance between action and strategy – no mean feat.

LIFESPAN 80%

Tough in places, but once you've unlocked the extra missions, that's it.

OVERALL

90%

A very well produced solid action-strategy that we're confident won't disappoint.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN:..... Worms 3D, 83%
WORSE THAN:..... Pikmin, 90%
WAIT FOR:..... It's the last action strategy game on GameCube
BEST PRICE:..... £29.99, play.com

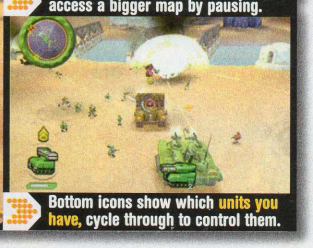
BASIC TRAINING

One of the game's biggest strengths is the way it introduces you to new elements, units and strategies very slowly – it might seem confusing at first glance, but it's really very simple...

Everything in *Battalion Wars* is pretty easy to understand.

Silver stars = secondary objectives, Gold = you *must* complete them

This radar shows enemy positions – access a bigger map by pausing.



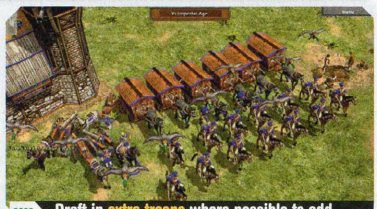
Bottom icons show which units you have, cycle through to control them.

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £29.99
DEVELOPER: ENSEMBLE STUDIOS • PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: NO • WEB: WWW.AGEOFEMPIRES3.COM • PLAYERS: 1-8

PC

AGE OF EMPIRES 3

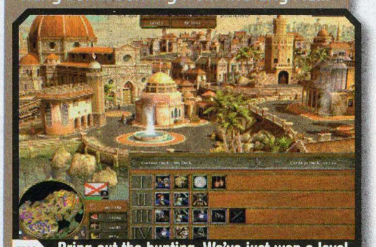
Be the master of your own creation...



Draft in extra troops where possible to add some muscle to your military campaigns.

CITY SLICKER

Every time your army kills an enemy or completes a mission objective, it's rewarded by 'experience'. When your experience bar is full, you can nip to the Home City to order in supplies and fresh troops. In between missions, you can even upgrade your city, by either purchasing new 'cards' or abilities, or hang some bunting from the City Hall.



Bring out the bunting. We've just won a level, and bought some pretty decorations.

These new troops were shipped in from overseas to help us with our campaign.

It's when the cannonball slams into the front line of your infantry that you realise what strategy games have been missing for years: pain, and violence. Play *Warcraft* and *Command and Conquer,* and your little men will just fall over when they die.

In *Age of Empires 3,* they tumble and spiral. It's the same with buildings – vast chunks of masonry are wrenched free, clattering into the troops below. Combine that with some truly magical animation, and you have the most beautiful strategy game yet created.

The *Age of Empires* games are a mixture of fast paced real-time strategy and empire building. In this third version, your eye turns to the plains and prairies of America – it's newly discovered and ripe for exploitation – sorry – development. The long and winding storyline tells of a fountain of youth, buried somewhere within the new continent, and the race between nations to find it.

AGE BEFORE BEAUTY

Beneath the gloss, there are a few innovations. You can order shipments of food, gold, or even soldiers from your 'Home City' across the Atlantic. You can even create vast, towering battleships to batter your opponents from afar while they are vulnerable. Yet, the single player campaign feels hobbled by the demands of multi-player.

Playing online is only for the hardcore fans, but this is where the game feels most polished. Shame, then, that multi-player matches are just a little bit boring. GM

BEST BIT!

A group of four cannons or mortars can lay waste to practically any city. Fear them.

There we go. Nothing left but rubble and a weeping opponent – our work is done.

JUDGEMENT

TIM

GRAPHICS 92%
Some of the best animation we've seen in a strategy game yet.

GAMEPLAY 88%
The single-player missions are lots of fun, but the multi-player is a little boring.

LIFESPAN 80%
If you're not hooked by multi-player, you'll race through single player in days.

OVERALL

81%

It's innovative and beautiful, but far too focused on the dull multi-player for us.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..... Age of Empires 2, 76%
WORSE THAN: ..... Warhammer 40K: Dawn of War, 90%
WAIT FOR: ..... Rise of Nations: Rise of Legends, TBC

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: DS • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: MAXIS • PUBLISHER: EA • ONLINE: TRADE ITEMS
SPECIAL: USES INTERNAL CLOCK • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.THESIMS.EA.COM • PLAYERS: 1

DS

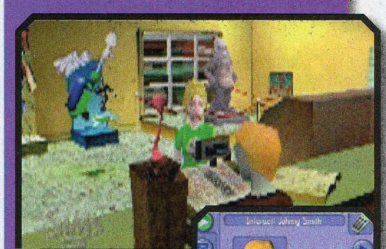
THE SIMS 2

Back again, but is it too sim-ilar to all the others?

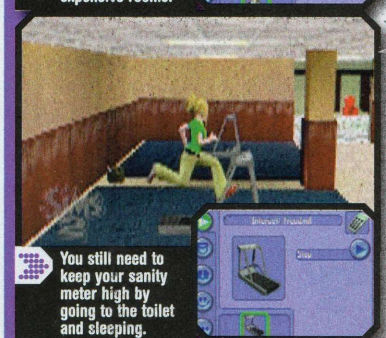
There are plenty of characters to meet in the game and 'wacky' conversations to be had.

REAL TIME

The Sims 2 on DS makes use of the DS's internal clock. So if something needs to be done at 8pm on Monday you'll need to wait it out for real.



You run a hotel in the game and can buy furniture to create better, more expensive rooms.



You still need to keep your sanity meter high by going to the toilet and sleeping.

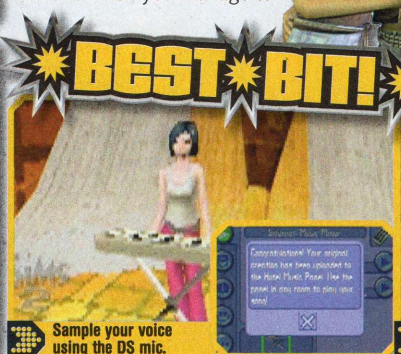
***The Urbz: Sims in the City* – the first *Sims* game to grace the DS – was hardly groundbreaking stuff. So it's a relief to see that Maxis has designed the latest 'their lives in your handheld' *Sims* fun specifically around the DS.**

The Sims 2 on DS is almost unrecognisable from its PC sim incarnation. Instead of being restricted to a house, you now have direct control of your Sim and can free-roam all around Strangetown. There are different items to interact with, all of which help you in your main mission goals. These crop up one at a time, replaced with a new one when you manage to fulfil the last. There are plenty of sub-quests along the way too, most of which enable you to earn more cash.

DOWNSIZING

Control-wise, it's not the easiest game to play – the D-pad moves your character while the shoulder buttons control the camera. But the touch screen has been put to good use. It makes placing furniture in rooms much easier and allows you to play interactive mini-games (like lottery scratch-cards). Like *The Urbz,* expect cringe-worthy dialogue and interactions that are more nonsensical than funny. But providing a *Sims*-style adventure game appeals to you, this will do the job nicely. GM

BEST BIT!



Sample your voice using the DS mic.

Paint pictures and sell them for cash.

JUDGEMENT

KATH

GRAPHICS 78%
It doesn't look stunning, but there's plenty of detail in Strangetown.

GAMEPLAY 78%
A nice mix of keeping your sim sane and fulfilling mission goals to progress.

LIFESPAN 78%
It takes a while to complete the game and longer to find all the secret stuff.

OVERALL

74%

Neat use of the DS, but it's nothing like the PC version which could put off *Sims* fans.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..... The Urbz: Sims in the City (DS), 70%
WORSE THAN: ..... The Sims 2 (PC), 91%
WAIT FOR: ..... Animal Crossing DS, Q4
BEST PRICE: ..... £24.99, amazon.co.uk

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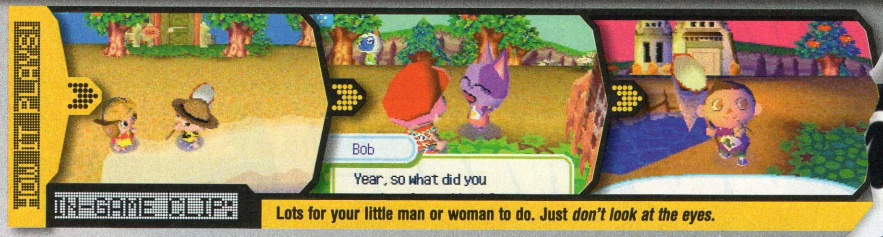
OUT NOW!

OUT: NOW (US), 31ST MARCH (UK) • FORMAT: DS • PRICE: £29.99
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO • ONLINE: MEET UP, CHAT
OTHER FORMATS: GC • WEB: WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM • PLAYERS: 1-4

WHAT IS IT?

DS remix of a Cube classic. Live a leisurely life in a forest full of deranged animal neighbours.

- Use DS WiFi or internet to interact with *AC*-ers from across the world.



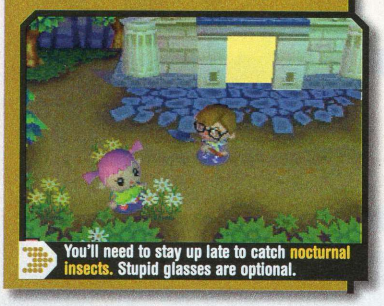
IN-GAME BLIP! Lots for your little man or woman to do. Just *don't look at the eyes.*

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

Evil purple cats in hats? Wild indeed...

GOOD DAY

The wild world of *Wild World* syncs up with the real world of the real world. It's not just a night/day thing: the seasons come and go correctly, too. Certain bugs only bother showing their 'faces' at certain times of the year.



You'll need to stay up late to catch nocturnal insects. Stupid glasses are optional.

A warning to longtime fans of living in forests with weird animals. The real differences between *Wild World* and *Animal Crossing* on GameCube pretty much begin and end with the fact that you arrive at your new town in a taxi rather than a train. Otherwise: same size map, same sights, same jobs, same mad shopkeeping raccoon.

But although having to build a new life from scratch in *exactly* the same way as before made us want to sigh until we ran out of lung, in reality we fell in love with *Animal Crossing* all over again the moment our first roll of Elegant Wallpaper fell out of a tree.

Animal Crossing's cut-down *Sims*-ish play is as rewardingly simple as ever – you move in, then you while away the days fishing, bug-catching and running errands for your animal neighbours. Get stuck in, and finding, earning and buying new furniture for your pixelated pad is as addictive as scooping up Pokémon. And because *AC* runs on a realtime clock – when it's 12pm on 15th January in your life, it's the same time in 'McFlyVille' or whatever you choose to call it – there's something fun and new happening when you visit. Even if it's just a cow selling turnips.

Silly hats abound in *Animal Crossing* – but you can now also get your hair styled up.

RUBBER SOUL

It's Christmas and New Year's rolled into one for your fingers, as the fiddliness of GC *Animal Crossing* is ditched in favour of easy-going stylus work. Some of it is obvious: you can drag an item onto your little fella or lass for wearing/eating purposes, or onto the ground if you want to drop it. But the placky pen can also be used for everything from digging up fossils to choosing what to blurt out to your neighbours.

Your wild-eyed alter ego is usually trotting about on the bottom screen, but he's shunted up to the top when you've got items to organise. Gives you a right face, he does.

It'll be a while before you ring up a personal fortune of 10,000 'Bells' (as *Animal Crossing's* currency is mysteriously called). It's just too easy to splurge it all on wardrobes and carpet.

GETTING AHEAD

Animal Crossing fits DS snugger than an elasticated blanket. Fashioning clothes designs or penning letters is now a pleasure rather than a chore thanks to the stylus, and it's one of the rare DS games where you'll want to ditch the D-pad entirely (especially when it comes to the quaint, relaxing pastime of goring a fish's cheek with a razor-sharp spike).

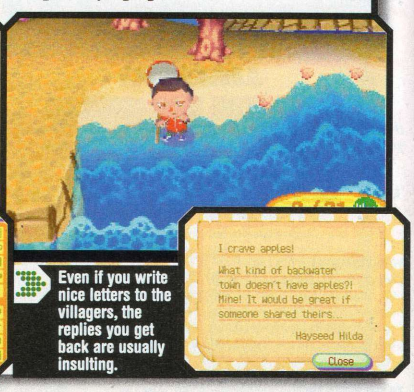
The game was just made for being flipped open for a quick five minutes. 15 minutes. Oh, go on then, half an hour. Then we'll have another look first thing tomorrow, just in case Tom Nook's got a new item in. And... you get the idea.

Wild World really is a little world in your pocket. If you don't find yourself setting the alarm at 8am on a Sunday to make sure you're up in time for the Fishing Tourney, you're clearly no fan of

MAKE DO

Wild World's furniture focus is an interior designer's dream come true – but there are other ways to pass the time that don't make you feel like you're playing an ad for Ikea.

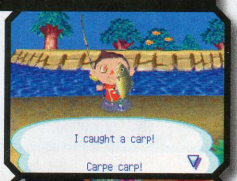
It *is* easy to design patterns for your clothes, hat, umbrella or door. The stylus slipped.


I crave apples!
What kind of backwater town doesn't have apples?!
Mine! It would be great if someone shared theirs...
Hayseed Hilda
Close

Even if you write nice letters to the villagers, the replies you get back are usually insulting.

CATCH 'EM ALL

The curator of the local museum – yes, he's an owl – doesn't twitter on as much as he used to. Good – because it ramps up the speed at which you can fill the building with your finds. Bag yourself a fish, drag it gasping and flapping to Mr Owl...



...and he'll ruffle his wings with pleasure before storing it in the museum's 'zoo rooms'. Then watch the bug being watched by your villager. Think we're wasting our time, eh? We'll point and laugh when we see *you* playing your guts out on the bus.

When Zombies

The closest alternative on your console:

HBOX Urbz: Sims in the City 71%
PS2 The Sims 2 .....74%
PC Singles 2: Triple Trouble is ruder, rubbisher, short on talking animals.....61%

games at all. Endless bug-catching and item-ferrying in order to rack up cash for new furniture – the nearest thing *Wild World* has to a 'goal' – means you *will* tire of it one day. But no quicker than you abandoned your Nintendog or gave up on your Sim.

And online functionality – the DS version's big sell? Pretty poor, sadly. Swap a 'friend code' with a mate and all you can do is meet up in one of your villages, chat to each other, and that's really about it. It's a neat way of swapping hard-to-find items 'in person', but compared to the fun you can have with people sharing your actual cart – leaving messages and gifts for each other, sharing gossip with DS-controlled villagers – it's a wasted opportunity, really.

Still, until Nintendo screw their heads on and give us a massively multi-player acres-wide *Animal Crossing* world that's populated by people from right around the globe, this will do very nicely indeed. But don't think *Wild World* is cute. It's like a digital version of Royston Vasey: the same things happening week by week, a set of unnerving neighbours – but you really will never leave. GM

GET THE HOOK UP

Mario Kart proved that even sea anemone could cope with getting online with DS, and *Animal Crossing* is just as easy. You can't just wander into anyone's village, though, as you'll need a Friend Code first. Which you get from – yes! – a friend.

Find somewhere that allows free DS WiFi, or use your own network and wait for the doors to open.

We're in! We've been invited to stroll around the village of our friend. Nice.

Now we're all standing on the shore and waiting for fish to turn up. Future of gaming!

TIME OF YOUR LIFE

You can't sit down with *Wild World* for hours and hours: read your letters, do a bit of a shopping, and your options run dry for the day. Like *Nintendogs*, it's best enjoyed in small doses. Unlike *Nintendogs*, you don't have to clean up poo.

Getting fossils identified means writing letters. Animals aren't allowed email, you see.

Tom Nook's back, but he's removed the word 'carousing' from his brain dictionary this time. Good.

JUDGEMENT

MARK

GM LOVES

+ Tons of stuff to buy, find and collect
+ New things to see all year round
+ Guitar-playing dog? Eat that, *Nintendogs*

GM HATES

- It's a lazy rehash of the GC version
- Online is a wasted opportunity
- DS-controlled neighbours are scary idiots

GRAPHICS 80%
Very pretty: the new way the world 'pours' down the screen is just lovely.

GAMEPLAY 82%
Your new obsession. Even though, essentially, there's *nothing happening.*

LIFESPAN 80%
If you're still playing the GameCube version one year on, you'll know.

OVERALL

92%

One of Ninty's best ideas – and now it comes with you to the shops. *Nintendogs* is history.

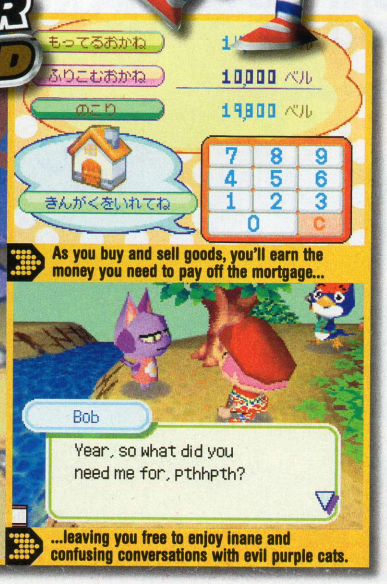
SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN:.....The Sims 2, 74%
WORSE THAN:.....nothing similar
ALSO OUT NOW:.....The Movies
BEST PRICE:.....£25.99, gameplay.co.uk

"DON'T THINK WILD WORLD IS CUTE. IT'S LIKE A DIGITAL VERSION OF ROYSTON VASEY"

BEST BIT! GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

Placing your first bit of furniture gives you a warm glow. Which soon turns into an out-of-control inferno of addiction.



As you buy and sell goods, you'll earn the money you need to pay off the mortgage...

...leaving you free to enjoy inane and confusing conversations with evil purple cats.

REVIEW

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £44.99
DEVELOPER: INDIE BUILT • PUBLISHER: 2K SPORTS • ONLINE: HIGH SCORES
OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.AMPEDSNOWBOARDING.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

What is it?

No, not *SSX* or *1080* – this is the third incarnation of that 'other' snowboarding game.

- 7 new resorts
- 100s of challenges
- 300 indie tracks

Your turn, player!

THE GAME BIT: Grabbing Piñatas makes a change from the usual tokens, eh hombre?

AMPED 3

Is it still in peak shape or just piste off its head?

TRICKY

Much more accessible than its predecessors, getting tricky and linking together point-amassing combos is the key to grabbing those gold medals in *Amped 3*.

The grind meter allows you to judge your balance as you slide down rails.

Waggle the stick up and down to initiate what's knows as 'butter' tricks like this one.

Style tricks are triggered by half-pressing the analogue stick. We hope we land this one...

The 'awesomeness' auras look... well, plain awesome. As they say on the slopes.

SKI OR DIE

It may not have playable skiers *a la SSX On Tour*, but to make up for it, *Amped* does let you rev down the piste in a selection of weird and wonderful creations. Torpedo sledging anyone?

High octane, high risk sledging is edge-of-your-seat exercise. Nerves of steel required.

Hurl yourself off a torpedo sledge if at all possible. More pain equals more pointage.

Snowmobiles are completely pointless unless you like driving *up* mountains.

One of the more understated Xbox 360 launch titles, could *Amped 3* be a true *SSX: On Tour* beater for the next-generation or is it just plain abominable?

A kind of *Total Overdose* for snowboarding fans, *Amped 3's* crazy challenges will have you is hunting down Piñatas on the piste, leaping through psychedelic hoops, hurtling downhill on a sled *trying to injure yourself* as seriously as possible, hang gliding from cliffs and pulling off crazy stunts for gaggles of photographers. Madness.

FIRED UP

Amped's trippy nature extends to its novel 'awesomeness' auras – including zen, urban and sci-fi – which light up the screen when you trick out your awesomeness meter, before dropping the jaws of the piste regulars with your silky skills. Okay, so it's hard to shake that 'tacked-on' feeling at times, but it's all good clean fun.

GOGGLE-EYED

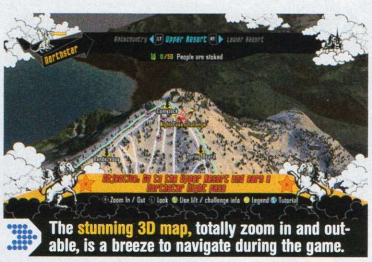
Shame then, that the real meat of the game – the snowboarding itself – is so half-baked. We weren't keen on EA's decision to overhaul *SSX 3's* near-perfect handling for *On Tour*, but it's still miles ahead of *Amped*. There's no real weight, no sensation of grinding through snow, and though racking up major points is fairly simple, you won't get that much of a sense of achievement from actually doing it.

Still, this is a game that has so much to give it's untrue. The cutscenes, which spoof everything from anime to EA to MTV to Nintendo, are plain mental, the indie soundtrack hits all the right notes, the powdery white stuff looks so real you almost want to chuck it at someone. *Amped* is a true dark horse from the white piste.

Lacking in true quality but oozing charm, this is the unexpected treat in 360's launch line-up. GM

"THIS IS AN UNEXPECTED TREAT IN THE 360 LINE-UP"

A bizarre hybrid of *Pilotwings* and *Far Cry*, hang gliding is *Amped* is joyous, apart from when you overbalance and plunge to your doom...



The stunning 3D map, totally zoom in and out-able, is a breeze to navigate during the game.

Amped 3's baldie villains hail from 'Colonotronic Arts'. Sounds familiar...

Other formats

The closest alternative on your console:

PS2 XBOX CUBE PSP SSX: On Tour (85%) or SSX 3 (93%). The premier 'boarding titles.
CUBE 1080 Avalanche (90%). A great alternative for Ninty owners.

JUDGEMENT

ROB

GM LOVES

- Riotous sense of humour
- HD snow looks lush
- More fun than *On Tour*
- Great soundtrack

GM HATES

- Story mode lurches all over the place
- Complicated trick engine lacks *SSX's* sparkle
- The snowmobile/glider bits get tiresome

GRAPHICS 360
The white stuff looks tops, if a touch sterile. *On Tour's* still prettier though.

GAMEPLAY 360
One adrenaline rush after another – such a pity the actual boarding's so iffy.

LIFESPAN 360
Resortfuls of challenges and secrets, but online content is underwhelming.

OVERALL

79%

Barking mad – it deserves locking up in a mental institution. Top fun though.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: ..... Amped 2, 72%
WORSE THAN: ..... SSX: On Tour, 85%
WAIT FOR: ..... SSX 4, 2006
BEST PRICE: ..... £39.99, play.com

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £34.99 • DEVELOPER: THQ • PUBLISHER: YUKE'S
• ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: PS2 • WEB: WWW.THQ.CO.UK • PLAYERS: 1-4

THE GAME

A squeezed-down but no less muscular version of everyone's favourite grappler.

- Three – three! – mini-games
- All your favourite wrestlers – and several awful ones

NOW PLAYING

IN GAME BITS

Carlito lays a Caribbean-style beating down on the hapless Taijiri. Cool? Real cool.

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2006

Pound-for-pound, it's the best wrestler on the roster...

Little wrestlers or big ones; it's personal preference, isn't it? Some people prefer the little chaps – they're quicker, more acrobatic, and don't have to get their breath back quite so often. And then some people prefer big ones, because they can throw the little wrestlers across the room.

SmackDown!'s the same – both the PSP and PS2 games are just about equally good, but you're going to prefer one or the other, and it's absolute lunacy to get both.

MINI MAULERS

SmackDown! on PSP is almost exactly the same game as its bigger brother, with the odd improvement. The grappling system's exactly the same, except that moves that used L2 and R2 now use a double-button press, which hardly makes a difference. The roster's exactly the same, except for Legends like Jimmy 'Mouth Of The South' Hart and Jake 'The Snake' Roberts, who are cheekily unlockable on the PS2 version *but only* if you 'import' them from this one.

The moves lists are exactly the same except for minor tweaks like the 'Possum pin' – an attack that lets you reverse a ground attack into a small-package sort of move, which we've never, ever managed to use in a proper match.

Even the Career and Create-a-Wrestler mode's are the same, so it's entirely possible to port wrestlers between the two versions, earning season points on the bus and fiddling with your tattoos while you're, erm, waiting at the tattoo parlour. It's quite incredible how much they've squeezed onto PSP, but should you *really* be investing in two almost-identical games?

SmackDown! vs Raw 2006's lengthy matches tend to feel more at home on the PS2, and you can best appreciate those huge, sweaty character models on the bigger machine.

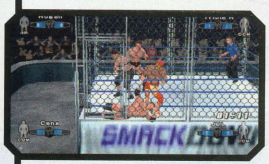
LEGENDS IN LYCRA

We'd suggest getting that, and then renting this for the weekend to unlock the extra characters. And then making Rey Mysterio hammer the Big Show with a chair, just to keep him in his place. Those big burly lads aren't so tough, you know...

It's now possible to steal an opponent's taunt. Possible, but sort of pointless.

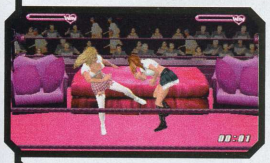
MATCH ME UP

All the big match types are in there, including the new Bar Brawl environment.



In cage matches, it's now possible to escape out of the door, but it's quicker to go out over the top.

There's even the lengthy Buried Alive match. But the PSP battery only lasts about four hours...



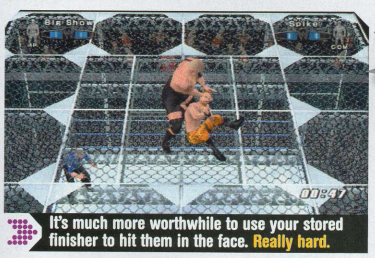
You can dress Trish up as a schoolgirl – but it's hard to see the naughty bits on the PSP's tiny screen.

OTHER FORMATS

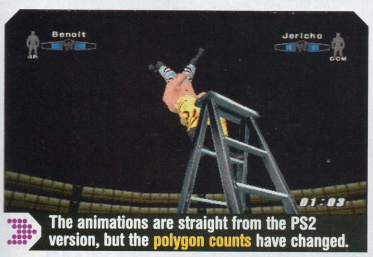
The closest alternative on your console:

PS2	WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2006	82%
CUBE	WWE Day Of Reckoning 2	79%
XBOX	WWE Wrestlemania 21	61%

"SMACKDOWN ON PSP IS ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME AS ITS BIGGER BROTHER"

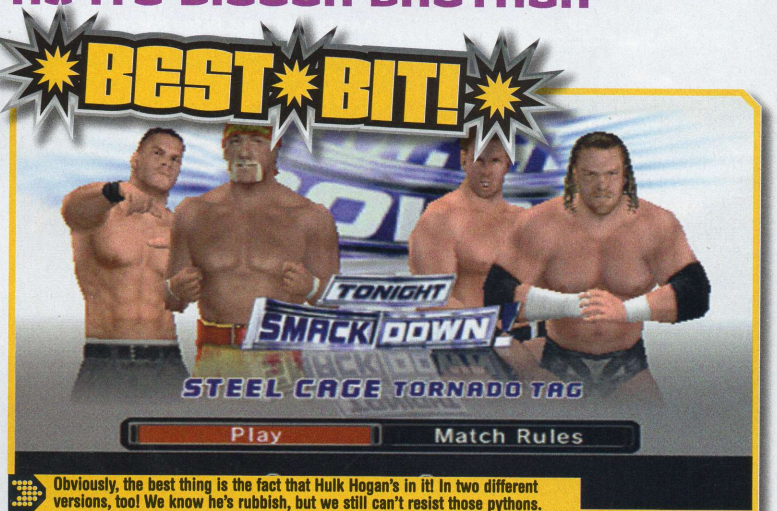


It's much more worthwhile to use your stored finisher to hit them in the face. Really hard.



The animations are straight from the PS2 version, but the polygon counts have changed.

BEST BIT!



Obviously, the best thing is the fact that Hulk Hogan's in it! In two different versions, too! We know he's rubbish, but we still can't resist those pythons.

JUDGEMENT

JOEL

GM LOVES

+ Tinkering with the Create-a-Wrestler models while watching the real thing on telly – it's actually quite relaxing

GM HATES

- Getting trapped on the floor while a wrestler repeatedly stamps on us
- Getting all tired thanks to the new stamina system

GRAPHICS 3/5

Excellent animations, but a bit glitchy on some of the main event matches.

GAMEPLAY 3/5

An almost flawless recreation of the classic PS2 control system.

LIFESPAN 3/5

Every bit as value-packed as its bigger brother with some extra legends, too.

OVERALL

83%

Technically astounding but barely any different from its bigger brother.

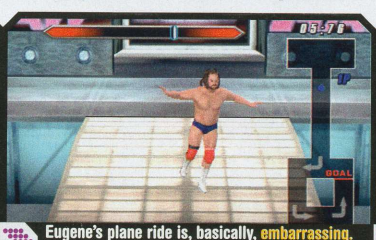
SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN:..... Rumble Roses, 52%
WORSE THAN:..... Soul Calibur 3, 92%
WAIT FOR:..... Rumble Roses XX, TBC
BEST PRICE:..... £29.99, amazon.co.uk

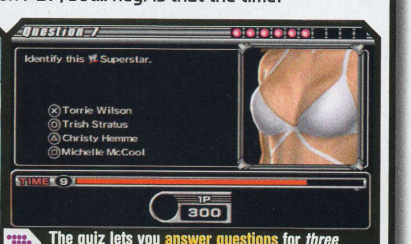
DEAL ME IN, JBL...

It's not just clanging men with chairs, of course – THQ have thoughtfully provided some mini-games, too. A cynical observer might say they've only been included because Sony insist that games have to be slightly different on PSP, but... hey! Is that the time?

The wrestlers have got the hang of Texas Hold 'Em – 'poker face' doesn't mean punch the table.



Eugene's plane ride is, basically, embarrassing. Steer the man-child! Stop him from falling over!



The quiz lets you answer questions for *three seconds* after it eliminates the wrong options.

REVIEW

OUT: 13TH JANUARY • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £39.99
DEVELOPER: NAMCO • PUBLISHER: NAMCO • ONLINE: DOWNLOADS
OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.NAMCO.COM • PLAYERS: 1-14

THE STATS

It's the latest in the famous *Ridge Racer* series and the first to make use of Xbox 360's power.

- More than 130 cars
- 30 circuits
- Over 250 races

IN GAME CLIP

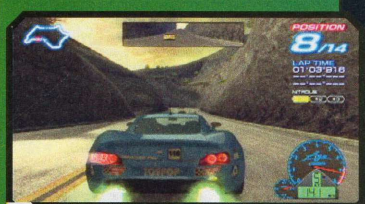
It's all about the sideways action: Turn into the corner, release the accelerator then smack it down and ride the skid. Whoo-ha!

RIDGE RACER 6

New console! New *Ridge!* Squint a bit and it'll all be fine...

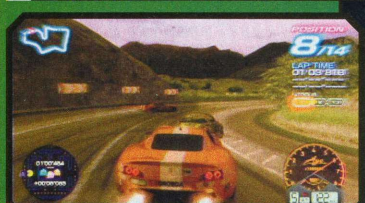
GO NITRO!

The nitrous system from *Ridge Racer PSP* has been stolen and jacked up to make top speeds even faster. Do drifts to top up your meter through three stages then fire off a single nitrous (fast) a double nitrous (faster) or a triple nitrous (holymarymotherofgod!), depending on your nerve. It's surprising how tactical using nitrous can get and the system of one button, two button and two-buttons-together to choose how much nitro you use works well.



Wait until the road is clear before nitro-ing off into the distance. It's the only way to win.

Nitro changes the cars handling. Try boosting around a corner to test your skills.



Use your nitro and engage a slide to perform an 'ultimate'. This tops your meter up faster.

MULTI MADNESS

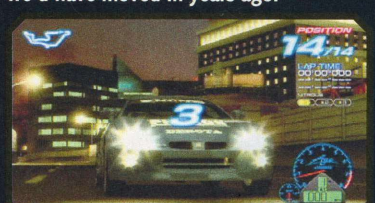
You've got two main options for multi-player. Either play against a friend (the 360 is more than up to the job of a two-player split-screen) or go on line with Xbox live and race against 14 other players. It's impressive stuff .

Choose matched cars and races can be a bit dull – you'll never catch them unless they foul up.

Not that way! Lose control in your sleek super-motor and a more careful adversary can nip by.

Aggressive driving will serve you well, though dodgy physics can mean you come off worst.

It must be great to live in the *Ridge Racer* universe. The streets are so clean. The sun is always shining and you can drive out of the city and be in the mountains in about, ohh, 20 seconds. If it wasn't for the fact that crossing the road is impossible due 200mph-plus racecars storming by then we'd have moved in years ago.



The game features fantasy cars, but all are brilliantly designed. We'd love to own them...

Welcome the sixth in the famous *Ridge Racer* series (not counting the handheld spin-offs). The future has never looked so bold 'n' beautiful. Concrete shards pierce grassy hills. Motorways tangle in an impossible spaghetti of slip-roads and fly-overs and – thanks to the power of Xbox 360 – we can see more cities, bridges, mountains, lakes, flocks of birds and firework displays miles away in the distance.

DRIVE TIME

And that famous *Ridge Racer* handling system is intact too. Forget any notion of 'driving simulation' and get down and dirty with sideways spins and drifts, where the only way to make a turn is to lose control of your car and grapple with opposite lock as you aim for the apex. And, should you miss, time your button bash and cream straight into the wall hey, you just bounce off harmlessly! See, we told you everything in *Ridge* Racer world was great.

360 does *Ridge Racer 6* effortlessly. If the new Xbox was petrol powered, like the cars it so easily creates, it would barely get out of third gear. But there's a nagging doubt that the game could deliver *so much more* than *Ridge Racer 6* puts on the screen.

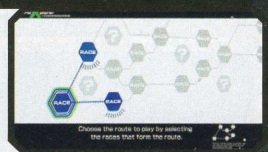
It's *exactly* the same to play as *Ridge Racer 5* and *Ridge Racer* on PSP. The squeaky clean looks are initially impressive, but you'll soon see chinks in its paintwork. Details look unfinished, some tracks are visibly better than others,

BEING REALISTIC

Certain details look stunning. Etched marble arches and pillars look 100% real and yet, just yards away, the front of a house is created from a single simple flat 'brick texture number 37'. But when you switch to external view, the scenery looks like a cartoon.

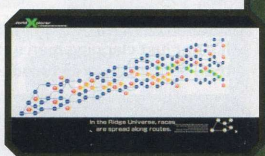
START HERE

You begin in the bottom left of the *Ridge 6* 'Universe'. You've got to win races to progress.



Each race you win lets you select one of the races next door. From there you get to choose again.

Chain a sequence of races together to make your own mini GPs. How you play is entirely up to you.

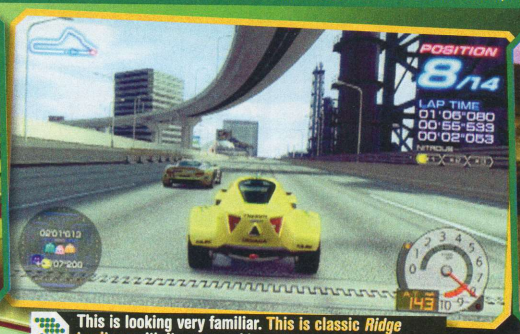


Beat all the races and you'll win the prize square you boxed in (which is always a new, faster car).

RIDGE UNIVERSE

There are 111 unique races, each carved from different routes through Ridge city. You'll enjoy the freedom at first but after a couple of days play the task of cracking *Ridge 6* to 100% completion snakes away like a lengthy, daunting, free for all.

Drive around a **futuristic airport**. We love this track for its lengthy straights and brutal right angle corners.



This is looking very familiar. This is classic *Ridge* territory with its super-wide motorways and flyovers.

And rolling hills too! Look, a windmill. This can only be Holland. Or is it Denmark? Daneland? Whatever...

AUTO MOTIVES

Playing the game unlocks new cars but forget the realistic stables of *Gotham* and *Gran Turismo*. *Ridge* always features bizarre made-up motors and *Ridge 6* is no exception. And, if anything, there are less cars in this game than any of the previous *Ridge Racers*.

Some of the new, full daylight races have a distinctly 'Euro-style' *Gotham* flavour to them.

Car handling is slippery at the best of times, but the more powerful motors have crazy levels of 'Dynamic Drift' – meaning that they're great in a straight line then all over the place in the bends. Watch out.

Direct Competition

The closest alternative on your console:

360	Project Gotham Racing 3	94%
DS	Ridge Racer	48%
PSP	Ridge Racer	90%

JUDGEMENT

DANIEL

GM LOVES

- + That famous *Ridge* handling
- + The brilliant nicking of the nitrous system
- + 111 all-new stunning *Ridge*-style tracks

GM HATES

- - Not as good looking as it could be
- - Too similar to previous games
- - Your 360 is capable of so much more

GRAPHICS
Looks like a brilliant videogame. Realism? You won't find it here.

GAMEPLAY
Exactly the same as any other *Ridge* game you've played. But still great.

LIFESPAN
It'll take an age to thrash every one of the 111 tracks if you're that way inclined.

OVERALL
78%
We expected more from *Ridge's* first super-powered 360 outing. Disappointing.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
AS GOOD AS: ..... Ridge Racer 5, 80%
WORSE THAN: .. Project Gotham Racing 3, 94%
ALSO OUT NOW: ..... NFS: Most Wanted
BEST PRICE: ..... £39.99, gameplay.co.uk

"COMPARED TO GOTHAM'S REALISM, RIDGE 6 IS LIKE DRIVING AROUND IN FINDING NEMO"

while others still are better designed and more fun to race.

RACE AGAINST TIME

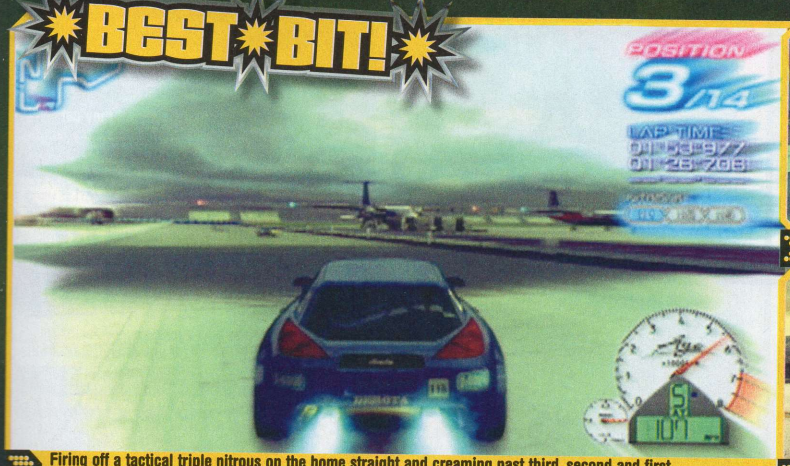
Flocks of birds and bursts of fireworks feel like hastily-added levels of extra depth to take your eye off the flat, featureless, *Domestos*-ed world around you.

Compared to *Project Gotham's* realism, *Ridge 6* is like driving around in the cartoon world of *Shrek* or *Finding Nemo*.

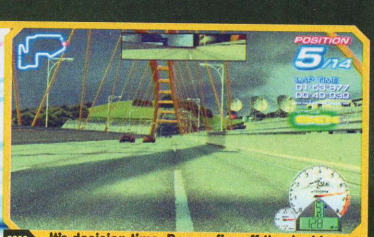
Sure, it's a superb-looking videogame (the kind of uber-arcade machine you'd have happily pumped pounds into five years ago) but one that fails to take the series to the proper 'next level' that the new machine allows.

Don't let the failure of *Ridge Racer* make you doubt 360's power (one glance at *Project Gotham* is enough to set this fact straight) but more an indication that the best games (i.e., those with significantly longer development times) are yet to come. GM

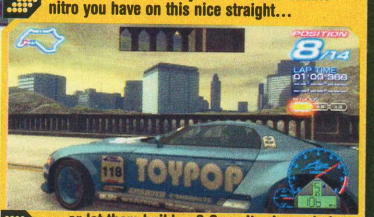
BEST BIT!



Firing off a tactical triple nitrous on the home straight and creaming past third, second and first place drivers to snatch a last minute victory from the jaws of defeat.



It's decision time. Do you fire off the double nitro you have on this nice straight...



... or let them build up? One nitro is ready in this shot. Let rip for a quick overtaking burst.

REVIEW

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £34.99
• DEVELOPER: KONAMI • PUBLISHER: KONAMI • ONLINE: NOW
• OTHER FORMATS: XB, PC • WEB: WWW.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM • PLAYERS: 1

When your character lifts anything up, he bends from his knees and not from the back, which is a very sensible way of lifting – fully in line with Health and Safety legislation. Well done.

CRIME LIFE: GANG WARS

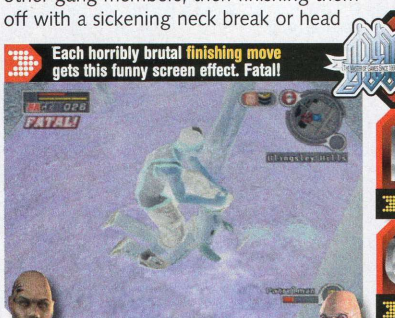
Just ignore it, hopefully it will go away

It seems that some marketing men looked at Rockstar's success with *GTA: San Andreas* and came to the conclusion that gamers like 'gangsta' games, while completely ignoring the one state, three cities, parachuting, rocket pack and unparalleled freedom bit.

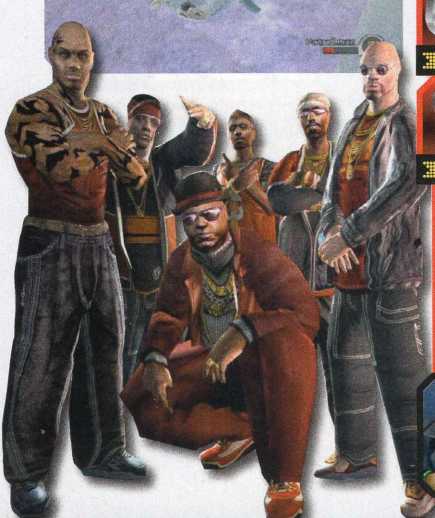
The result of this retarded conclusion are efforts like *Crime Life* which is a useless, useless game. Devoid of a single original idea, casually racist, excessively violent, humourless, badly put together and annoying to play – this just beats *Bulletproof* for being the most ugly, 'street styled' game in this issue.

The game is basically a beat-'em-up with you being a hoodlum battering other gang members, then finishing them off with a sickening neck break or head smash. This takes place in a crudely put together gangland full of lazily modelled thugs, in which you mince around looking for repetitive missions on a crappy little map. Bad games *can* be amusing to play, but not when they are exploitative and nasty as this.

You can't get from A to B without getting involved in a huge multi-man brawl.



Each horribly brutal finishing move gets this funny screen effect. Fatal!



JUDGEMENT — DAVE

GRAPHICS — Rubbish. Uses a strange top down view point, which is irritating.

GAMEPLAY — Tries to combine *The Warriors* with *GTA* but really isn't fit to tie their fat laces.

LIFESPAN — Endless streams of gang members waiting to get their heads kicked in.

OVERALL

36%

It manages to annoy you with its incompetence and disgust you with its attitude. Terrible.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....Fight Club, 25%
WORSE THAN:.....Def Jam Vendetta, 72%
ALSO OUT NOW:.....Saint's Row
BEST PRICE:.....£25, amazon.co.uk

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £29.99
• DEV: EA BIG • PUB: EA • SPECIAL: WIFI • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, XB, GC • WEB: HTTP://WWW.EASPORTSBIG.COM • PLAYERS: 1-4

The draw distance is impressive, but those mountains are actually just one big image.

Your opponent is marked by a column of red light, so you always know where they are.

SSX ON TOUR

As good as its console counterpart?

Yes, we *know* it's another console game, re-made, scaled-down and squeezed into PSP's modest frame, but, well, it's really, really good.

As keen readers will already know, the big new 'thing' in this year's *SSX* is the ability to use both snowboards and skis. This had many a snowboarding geek snorting with disgust, but to the winter sports layman, skiing feels almost *better* than snowboarding. Skis are far more responsive, the tricks look a million times cooler and rushing down the slopes backwards is an undeniable thrill. And tackling the drag lifts is a doddle.

SLOPING OFF

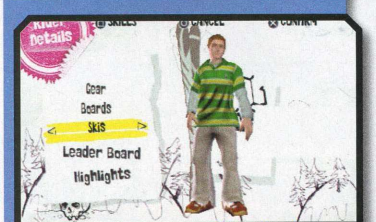
So how does the PSP version differ from its bigger, full-fat brother? Well, the visuals have obviously taken a knock, although they're still pretty impressive. The framerate is top-notch, too, but in exchange, the odd texture looks a bit blurry and low-res.

They've also included a load of old tracks from other *SSX* games, which makes it a collection of both classic and new content, much like *Ridge Racers*. But ultimately, it's a slick, quick remake of an already excellent game and the short-burst challenges are perfect for playing on PSP.

LEVEL UP

The option to edit your character isn't as vast as in the console versions – rather, you have pre-set costumes that change various elements of your stats. This does mean that wearing a garish plaid shirt might have an essential edging bonus that you desperately need, so you have to put up with looking like a fool.

Stats such as speed, edging and control are all affected by what you wear.

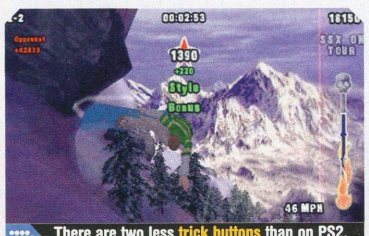


Whether you've chosen skis or boards, different models of each have varying stats.

PALMTOP PISTES

Some of the courses may be frustratingly hard and the camera goes a bit wonky at times, but this is as good as racing gets on the handheld. Just don't expect much of a change from the bigger versions.

'Uber Tricks' from the last few *SSX* games have been replaced with *'On Tour'* tricks.



There are two less trick buttons than on PS2, but there are still thousands of combos to do.

JUDGEMENT — ANDY

GRAPHICS — An amazingly smooth framerate and stunning draw distances.

GAMEPLAY — The PSP stick struggles a bit, but it's still playable, if a little too familiar.

LIFESPAN — Lots of challenges, but they get repetitive. Otherwise, reasonably lengthy.

OVERALL

80%

Still one of the best sports/racing games on PSP, if a little familiar if you played it on PS2.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....Amped 3, 79%
WORSE THAN:..SSX On Tour (PS2), 85%
BEST PRICE:.....£29.99, gameplay.co.uk

- OUT: NOW
- FORMAT: XB 360
- PRICE: £39.99
- DEVELOPER: RARE
- PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
- ONLINE: CO-OP
- OTHER FORMATS: NONE
- WEB: WWW.RAREWARE.NET
- PLAYERS: 1-2

What is it?

Epic adventure that follows fairy Kameo as she battles to save her peaceful homeland from idiot trolls.

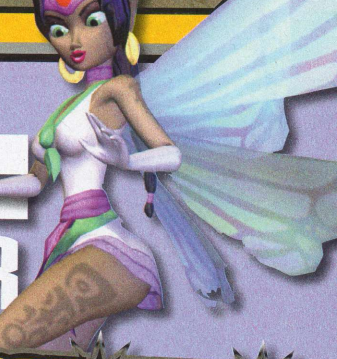
- Ten creature morphs
- Replay stages to get score bonuses

Gameplay

Cycle through Kameo's monster forms to defeat enemies and solve puzzles.

KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

Are 10 heads better than one?



MORPH MOFO

By the end of the game, Kameo will have access to 10 different monster forms. These can be earned by defeating the Shadow Trolls dotted around the world.

Thermite is a teensy little ant carrying a giant lava cannon on his back. Aww.

Pummel Weed is a plant-type warrior whose specialities are, erm, boxing and grinning.

You can unlock new warrior powers by finding seeds scattered around the world.

It's been a long time coming, but will it be a long time staying? *Kameo: Elements of Power* has been on our radar for years, but never close enough for us to ask that kind of question of it. So – what's the answer? For some of you, *Kameo* will be an extensive and impressive adventure. But only for some.

An obvious amount of effort has gone into *Kameo's* looks; from the stunning greenery and life that ripples around the game's Enchanted Kingdom hub, to the vast Battlefield where thousands of troops scrap it out, to the towering bosses and some of the better, charming character designs on offer.

BEST BIT!

The Throne Room – a galaxy of dusty bits bob through the air above a shiny throne and reflective floor. Best-looking bit, then, really...

Other formats

The closest alternative on your console:

CUBE Zelda: The Wind Waker 97%
XBOX Sudeki 75%

CANDID KAMEO

But it's a mix of action and adventure that we wish had gone a bit deeper in both regards; a pairing that's comfortable and grand, but not brilliant. There's a good sense of exploration, with each new area containing a handful of graphical delights to gawp at and handfuls of side-quests to dedicate your time to. But, sadly, it falls short of memorable greatness thanks to some puzzles and disappointing boss fights that feel by-the-numbers, even if they offer some dramatic scale and impressive views.

While there's an amazing engine at work beneath it all – one that could probably drive Ireland to America – the action aspect feels like it's begging to be expanded and given a far greater role in the game.

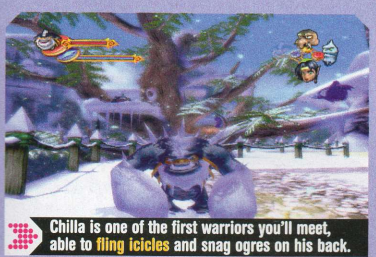
Boss characters are huge. And by 'huge', we mean they'd see New York as a bed of nails.

Choose three creatures to map to the face buttons (perform actions using the triggers).

CHAOS ENGINE

Playing co-operatively with a friend, though, is definitely where *Kameo* comes into its own and shines. Whether in split-screen or over Live, the potential for causing chaos is doubled into something that's supremely enjoyable with another person in tow.

GM



Chilla is one of the first warriors you'll meet, able to fling icicles and snag ogres on his back.

"IT FALLS SHORT OF GREATNESS THANKS TO BOSS FIGHTS THAT FEEL BY-THE-NUMBERS"

JUDGEMENT

STEVE

GM LOVES

- The expanse and chaos of the battlefield
- Live co-operative play
- The excellent music

GM HATES

- Some of the duller puzzles
- Kameo herself; she's the blandest character in the game
- That the action isn't more intense

GRAPHICS 82%
Some of the finest we've seen, but in a style that won't be to everyone's taste.

GAMEPLAY 80%
A decent sense of exploration, some good puzzles but nothing outstanding.

LIFESPAN 82%
It's the ideal length for an adventure game, with high score replay modes.

OVERALL

82%

Technically impressive, it's an engaging adventure that doesn't qualify as a classic.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: ..... Starfox Assault, 78%
WORSE THAN: ..... Perfect Dark Zero, 85%
WAIT FOR: ..... Blue Dragon, 2006
BEST PRICE: ..... £39.99, play.com

BATTLE FEELED

The Battlefield is *Kameo's* money shot, a square-mile expanse filled with evil trolls and good-guy elves. And you, of course, stomping through the fray like a bull with a hot knife in a china shop that sells butter. After thrashing the boss of each of the game's main areas, you'll have to return here in order to defend the Elemental Temples that provide the shield for Kameo's homeland. These battles are nowhere near as puzzle-oriented as the rest of the game, often giving you free reign to join the fray and send enemies scattering.

Your horse helps transport you around the terrain, but be careful – it can be hijacked, too.

You can smash through the troll ranks if you like, but you'll take out your guys in the process.

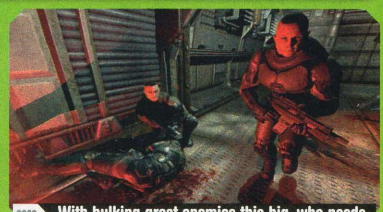
All manner of giant ogres and massive tanks get involved in the ruckus later in the game.

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £44.99 • DEVELOPER: RAVEN • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
• ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: PC • WEB: WWW.QUAKE4GAME.COM • PLAYERS: 1-8

XBOX 360 PC

QUAKE 4

The PC blaster spreads its oats onto the 360...

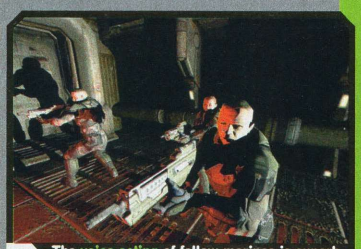


With hulking great enemies this big, who needs friends? Erm... we do! We do!

THE 'I' IN TEAM

Quake 4 teams you up with various squads of marines as you battle through its winding dark corridors. You can't kill them yourself, but then there's more than enough danger for everyone to keep you terrified.

You may be armed to the teeth, but you're never ever safe from danger.



The voice acting of fellow marines is superb. Do they know something you don't?

Bigger, better and bloodier than ever before, *Quake* is back and will literally have you cowering behind your sofa (thanks to those wireless pads) just minutes after you fire up the game. *Quake 4* picks up right where *Quake 2* left off and brings back all of your favourite weapons (Nailguns, Riot Shotguns, Grenade Launchers) with it for an explosive romp through deep space

You play as Matthew Kane, a marine who through a series of unfortunate events finds himself captured by, and converted into none other than, a Strogg. Which is a bummer, until you realise you're now able to wreak havoc with a whole host of new Strogg-like abilities enabling you to ass-kick like never before.

Campaign mode is intense, fast-paced action all the way as you battle alongside squads of marines fighting for survival. Well placed set-pieces (although they are scripted) add a new element to the series and really bring home the feeling of danger surrounding Kane and his team. Enemies crash through walls and comrades fall at your side, all in beautiful 360-o-vision making this game really terrifyingly good to look at.

There's multi-player too, delivering probably the fastest experience outside of PGR3 that Xbox live is going to see, so if it's non-stop Sci-fi action you're after this Xmas, look no further. *Quake* is back and by the looks of things... it's going nowhere. GM

BEST BIT!

That's what we call gruesome. The deaths in *Quake 4* will keep you up night after night.

Larger than life enemies like this require you to a) think fast... and b) move faster.

JUDGEMENT

MIKE

GRAPHICS 10/10
Shiny, nasty and nauseatingly realistic, this is what the 360 was made for.

GAMEPLAY 9/10
Fast, frenetic action all the way. Terrifying too.

LIFESPAN 8/10
Battling online in the fast-paced multi-player will always bring you back.

OVERALL

81%

A first-person shooter so bloody good you must make sure Santa knows you want it.

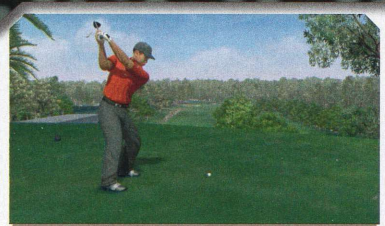
SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....Killzone, 79%
WORSE THAN:.....Doom 3, 90%
WAIT FOR:.....Gears of War, March
BEST PRICE:.....£39.99, gameplay.com

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £49.99 • DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS • PUBLISHER: EA • ONLINE: NO MATCHES • OTHER FORMATS: XB, GC, PC, PSP, PS2 • WEB: WWW.EASPORTS.CO.UK • PLAYERS: 1

PS2 XBOX GAMECUBE PC PSP XBOX 360

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06

This is one tiger you just can't hold back...



There's only a few courses on offer here, but golf has still never looked better.

Tiger Woods on 360 should have been as essential as Ian Poulter playing golf in ridiculous trousers. Unfortunately, EA seemed to have spent all their time on creating lovely grass textures and not much else.

OUT OF THE WOODS

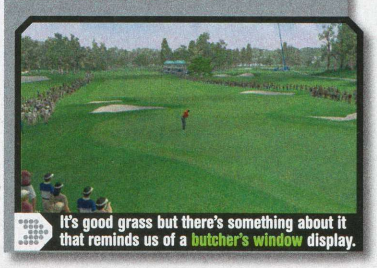
Sure, there's a slight re-jig in the controls that will make it more of a challenge for Woods newbies but it doesn't take long to master. This is a better looking but well trodden course.

Still, at least it's as feature packed as its last-gen predecessors though, isn't it? Er. No. It feels like half the game's missing. There are a mere six courses on offer – Pebble Beach, Riviera Country Club, Pebble Beach, TPC at Sawgrass, Carnoustie, Pinehurst No. 2, and Turnberry. To extend its lifespan, the last five can only be unlocked by completing in increasingly tedious and lengthy career challenges.

You could suggest this was rushed out for 360's launch. While many might welcome the chance to play *Tiger* on the 360, we have to warn you despite the good looks, it's a diluted experience. GM

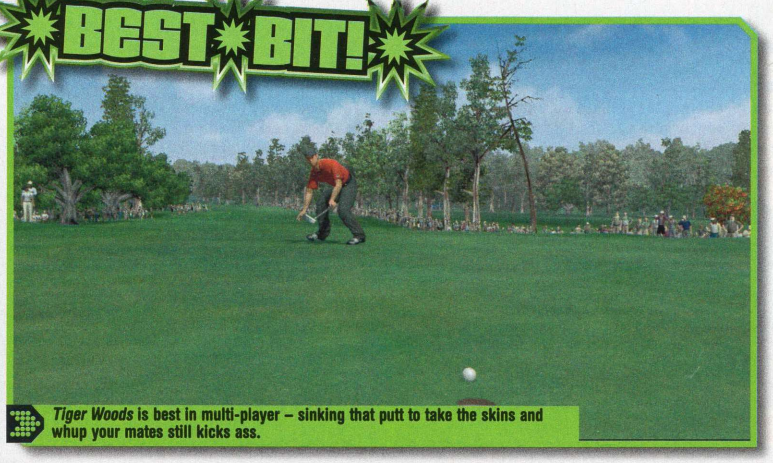
IN THE HOLE

One of the most noticeable improvements in *Woods 06* is the inclusion of dynamic crowds. They'll cheer your cracking shots and bring to life to what were otherwise lifeless courses. Once you've experienced them it seems strange to think they were never there before.



It's good grass but there's something about it that reminds us of a butcher's window display.

BEST BIT!



Tiger Woods is best in multi-player – sinking that putt to take the skins and whup your mates still kicks ass.

JUDGEMENT

PETE

GRAPHICS 6/10
An improvement, but still not the jaw-dropping experience we'd hoped for.

GAMEPLAY 7/10
Still the best translation of golf to joypad ever created.

LIFESPAN 5/10
A mere six courses doesn't justify a quite considerable price tag.

OVERALL

63%

The latest *Tiger Woods* seems to playing well within itself – wait for 07's is our advice.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....actually playing golf
WORSE THAN:.....Tiger Woods 2004, 84%
WAIT FOR:.....The inevitable Tiger Woods 2007, TBC
BEST PRICE:.....TBC

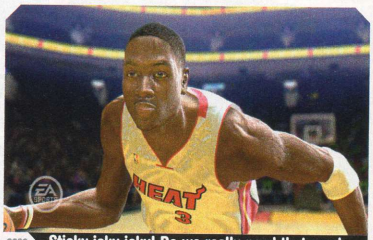
NBA LIVE 06

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £44.99
DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS • PUBLISHER: EA
OTHER FORMATS: XBOX, PS2, GC, PC
WEB: WWW.EASPORTS.CO.UK • PLAYERS: 1-4

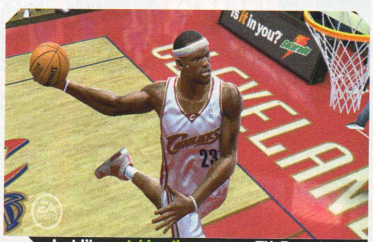
Hoops, sweat and cheers...

NBA Live 06 is the latest offering into the sweaty world of basketball games. Basking in the 'as seen on TV' glow, it certainly looks the business. With easily the most realistic looking players ever seen on a console (you can actually see individual beads of sweat running down players' necks), and top-notch animation, it's quite feasible to have few mates round, crack open the Doritos and feel like you're actually watching a real game.

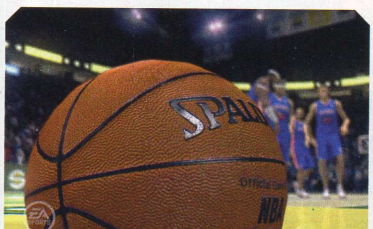
Gameplay-wise, little has changed except that penalty shots are now taken by 'flicking' the right thumbstick – making scoring now feel like a genuine achievement as opposed to luck. It's not taking videogame basketball to the next level, but *NBA Live 06* is still plenty of fun and looks superb. GM



Sticky icky icky! Do we really need that much detail? Realism can go too far sometimes.



Just like watching the game on TV. Except better, because you're involved in the game.



Even the players themselves can't believe how good that ball looks – check out the detail.

REVIEWER: MIKE OLDMAN

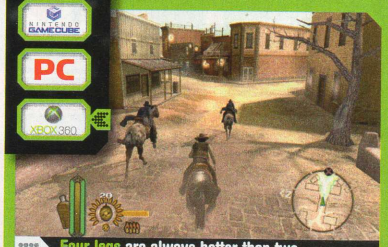
JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 79%

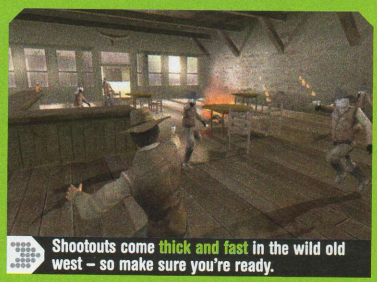
Not quite basketball evolved, but amazingly realistic on the 360.

GUN

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB 360 • PRICE: £44.99
DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
OTHER FORMATS: XBOX, PS2, GC, PC
WEB: WWW.GUNTHEGAME.COM • PLAYERS: 1



Four legs are always better than two, especially when you're riding out of town.

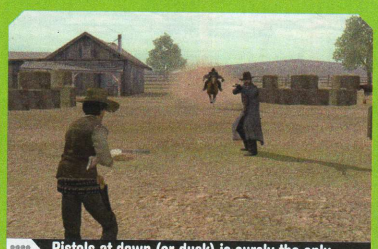


Shootouts come thick and fast in the wild old west – so make sure you're ready.

One word is all it takes...

Originally we thought about writing this review in the one-word-form of its glorious title, but that would be just silly. Game. 360. Port. Doesn't really work does it? But it does sums up *Gun*, the latest from *Tony Hawk* coders, Neversoft, and another in the long line of cross platform games appearing in the 360 launch line-up. It's a shame, then, that given the awesome power of Microsoft's angelic beauty that no effort has been made to make use of its full potential.

Offering little more than a high-res version of the Xbox game, *Gun* is a disappointment. Sure it has the wild west, free-roaming elements, a half decent plot, and the chance to ride on horseback – but this really is nothing to shout about in terms of the future of 360. GM



Pistols at dawn (or dusk) is surely the only 'fair' way to settle an argument.

REVIEWER: MIKE OLDMAN

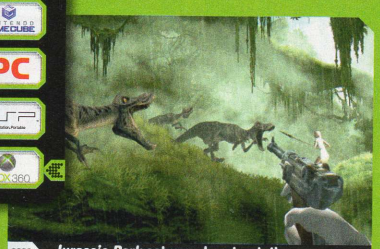
JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 69%

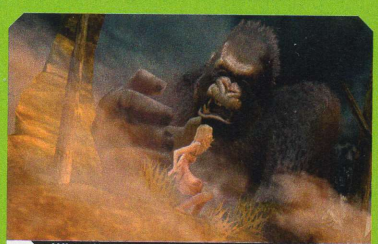
An enjoyable enough affair, but it' doesn't show off the 360's might.

KING KONG

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XBOX 360 • PRICE: £44.99
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTPELLIER • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
OTHER FORMATS: PC, GC, PS2, PSP, XBOX • WEB: WWW.KINGKONGGAME.COM/US • PLAYERS: 1



Jurassic Park eat your heart out, these buggers really mean business.



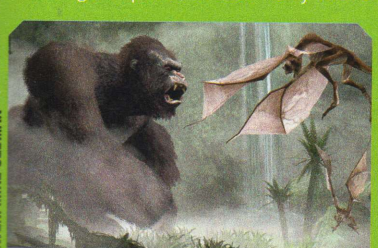
When Kong rears up at you from out of nowhere it really makes you jump!

The next generation of Ape...

Not content with running riot on every console in this current generation, *King Kong* rushes to the front of the queue to take on a bunch of unsuspecting next-gen gamers, this time on the Xbox 360.

Looking like a first-person shooter and tasting like an adventure game, *King Kong* is actually more of an interactive movie than anything else. Still with the 360 supplying all the power and graphical wizardry it can muster, the game looks dazzling – the scenery is breathtaking.

Dinosaurs are Spielberg-real and Skull Island looks so good you'll think you were watching an episode of *Lost* – only with err... a giant monkey. But nothing new has been added to the next-gen incarnation – at times this is more like owning the DVD than a game based upon it. GM



Skull island – no longer the number one holiday destination thanks to Kong.

REVIEWER: MIKE OLDMAN

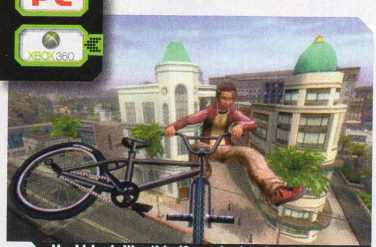
JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 72%

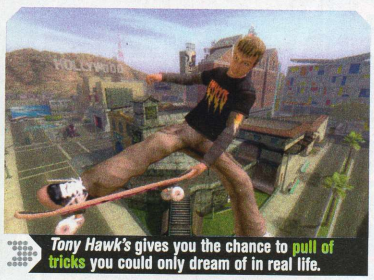
Solid, but hardly a must-have title for the 360. Disappointing.

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

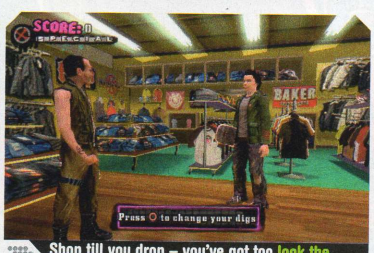
OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XBOX 360
PRICE: £49.99 • DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION • ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: XB, PS2, GC, PC PLAYERS: 1-8



You'd look like this if you had to land that trick – he should really be wearing a helmet.



Tony Hawk's gives you the chance to pull of tricks you could only dream of in real life.



Shop till you drop – you've got too look the part too, so head to the skate shop.

Pulls a new trick called 360 Port Grind...

Much like Neversoft's other next-gen effort, *Gun*, you can't escape the feeling that an 360 *Hawk* title should be offering more than a straight port from old-gen hardware.

Still, *American Wasteland* feels tighter than Tony's *THUG* incarnations with a refocus on 'boarding' substance over *Jackass* style. You arrive in LA as an out-of-towner, initially picked upon by the natives but a foxy skater chick helps you out by introducing you to the main players in the local scene, earn sponsorship and enter competitions. There's even slightly clumsy BMX sections but this is all about the tricks. Especially in Classic mode, this is a return to form that reminds us of what made virtual boarding cool – busting huge moves and grinding forever. GM

REVIEWER: PETER WEBBER

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 78%

Another masterclass in skate boarding from the Neversoft guys.

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328045	BACK TO THE FUTURE - SERIOUS S***
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328141	RINGTONE W**KER

TRUE TONES

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328333	THE DARKNESS - ONE WAY TICKET TO HELL AND BACK
328265	U2 - ALL BECAUSE OF YOU
328275	DR DRE FEAT EMINEM - FORGOT ABOUT DRE
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328294	DANNII MINOGUE - PERFECTION
328296	GOLDFRAPP - NUMBER ONE
328300	METALICA - NOTHING ELSE MATTERS
328317	BLACK EYED PEAS - MY HUMPS
328318	KANYE WEST - GOLD DIGGER
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328322	RIHANNA - PON DE REPLAY
328323	SUGABABES - PUSH THE BUTTON
328286	MADONNA - HUNG UP
328306	PUSSYCAT DOLLS - STICKWITU
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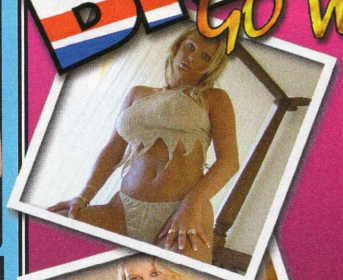

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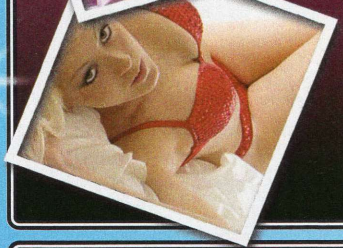

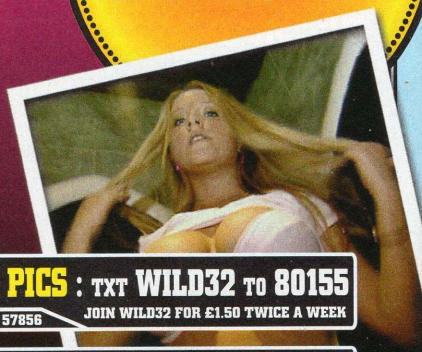

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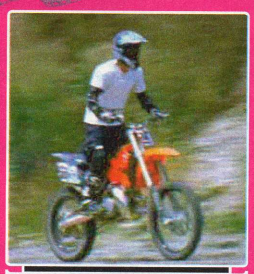

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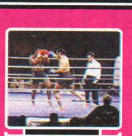

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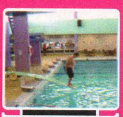

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326491	VEGAS BLACK JACK	A,B,D,F,G
326512	MR BEAN RACER	A,B,C,D,E,F
326515	SHREK 2	A,B,E,G
326517	THE MASK	A,B,C,D,G
326806	4X4 EXTREME	A,B,F,G
326811	CITY KNIGHTS	A,B,G
326815	KAO CHASE RACING	A,B,C,D,G
326506	CRICKET WORLD CH.	A,B,D,E
326817	NINJA MISSION	A
326821	WIRELESS BOXING	A,D,F,G
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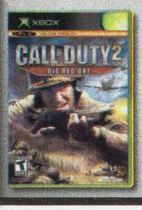
REVIEW

OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** XB • **PRICE:** £39.99
DEVELOPER: TREYARCH • **PUBLISHER:** ACTIVISION • **ONLINE:** DEATHMATCH, CTF, DOMINATION
OTHER FORMATS: PS2, GC • **WEB:** WWW.CALLOFDUTY.COM • **PLAYERS:** 1-2 SYSTEM LINK (1-16 ONLINE)

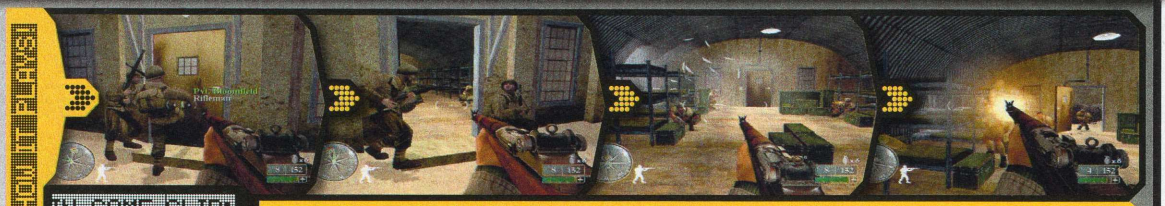
THE LAST TIME



The third WW2-'em-up proper in the series. But, oddly, nothing to do with the real *Call of Duty 2*.

- Over 36 bullet-delivery devices
- Missions in North Africa, Sicily and Europe

THE GAME BIBLE



Your squad's not so big: they'll wait for *you* to stroll in and make the bad man dead. Basts!

HEY B.R.O.

The First Infantry Division kicks off World War 2 in Algeria, as part of 'Operation Torch'...

... but you actually start the game in Germany. The rest of the game is a flashback, see.

The missions comprise of as many as 10 sub-missions. Most involve – no prizes – lots of bloody killing.

No WW2 game is complete without a picturesque boat ride to a beautiful oceanside retreat.

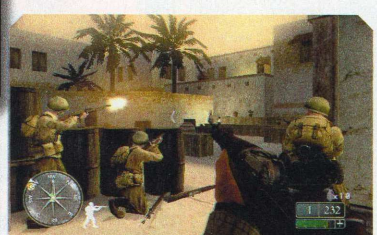
CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

Red or dead? Now you can be both at the same time...

It's been seven years since *Medal of Honor* landed on our shores. Which means that, scarily, virtual World War 2 has now outlasted the real thing. But there's videogame VE Day in sight; *Big Red One* opens a new front for *Call of Duty*, retelling the story of a specific US army division named after the big red '1' on their shoulder patches.

Confusingly, though, this *Call of Duty 2* isn't based on the PC/Xbox 360 *Call of Duty 2*. *Big Red One* features totally different missions, and you play as a US troop throughout. But what the two games do share is atmosphere.

Big Red One is a shell-shocking experience. There's fire and billowing smoke everywhere, squads of 30 troops or more on the horizon, disturbingly realistic deaths (including some superb overacting from the one we call 'Stagger Forward With Arms Flailing Guy'), and enough joypad rumbling to make you think your house is caving in.



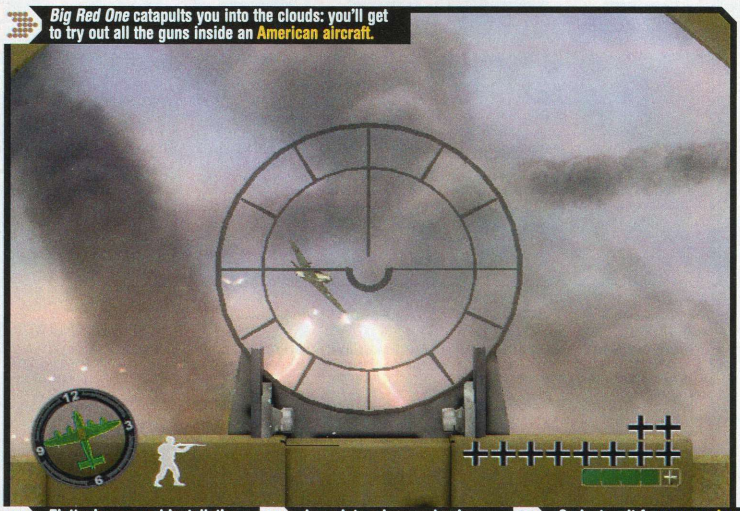
We know we shouldn't hide while our friends take care of the killing. But we're lazy.

BIG DEAD ONES

The thing is, realism isn't good for your health – this WW2 business is very good at killing you, fast. Your energy bar never

IN THE AIR TONIGHT

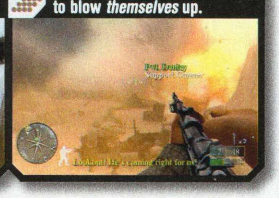
The *Big Red One* is a versatile army division: as well as stomping about with their feet, they take to the sky for thrilling aerial dogfights and climb inside rolling metal boxes.



Big Red One catapults you into the clouds: you'll get to try out all the guns inside an American aircraft.

Flattening ground installations is down to you. Bombs away!

Leap into a jeep and enjoy tricky ground-to-air warfare.



Or, just wait for enemy aircraft to blow *themselves* up.

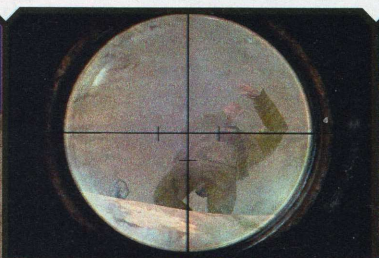
BEST BIT!

The opening mission in Sicily, which takes you through around five different locations and 20 different objectives. War really has never been so much fun.

BATTLE PLANS

The Big Red One isn't quite as brutally tactical as *COD2* on Xbox 360; it's just about possible to survive if you charge into a room with your rifle set to 'kill'. But you'll have favourite guns for different circumstances – the M1938 is zoom-happy for taking on horizon-hoggers, while the MP40 is good for mowing down large groups.

No need for accuracy: point in the vaguely correct direction and it's goodbye Mr German.



Snipers abound in North Africa. Borrow a rifle from a corpse and get cracking.

Bolt-action rifles are powerful, but they have a reload long enough to last until WW3.

When it comes to tanks, guns don't have much effect. Rocket launchers do, though, which is lucky.

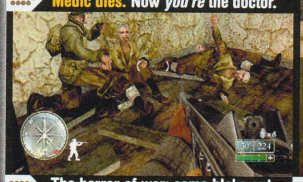
PATH TO GLORY

Big Red One is so determined to keep you on its prescribed path, it actually punishes you for exploring. You'll be accused of going 'AWOL' if you veer into an area the game's not ready for you. We took a wrong turn in North Africa and were booted straight off the mission.

SHOCK AND AWE

The First Infantry Division's campaign is big and red alright. There's a bloody nightmare waiting for you around every North African, Sicilian and European street corner.

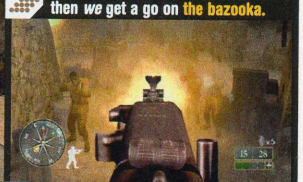
Bloke goes down. You fetch medic. Medic dies. Now *you're* the doctor.



The horror of war: some bloke cut down to three fingers in his prime.

While it's fun to watch dying soldiers make their last flailing grasp at life, there's no better game than 'The Human Fountain'. All you need is a grenade.

We hate to see our buddies die. But then *we* get a go on the bazooka.



Happiness is an automatic machine gun and a horde of Germans.

stays full for long, and the Nazis have apparently found the cheat for infinite soldiers, making it impossible to clear areas properly early on in the game. You have to take hits, and replay whole sections, thanks to the next checkpoint usually being so far away it's practically in a different game.

Still, the first casualty of war is your sense of self-worth. *The Big Red One* is forgiving about accuracy – Germans give up on life after seeing a bullet hit the wall behind their ear – and there's plenty of health and ammo to be had. So it's clearly *your* fault if you corpse yourself up. Stay alive, though, and this is as fast, frenetic and frighteningly explosive as a *Call of Duty* should be. Even if we're getting *really* tired of first-person turret shootouts by now.

CALL TO ARMS

Level paths are more linear than ever, giving *The Big Red One* a real shoot-'em-up feel – you're not getting into that next room until you find the route through that *one* bit of broken balcony. But thanks to chatty troops, big guns that make the screen shake and action that doesn't let up for a second, *The Big Red One* has more action than you can shake a Carcano M1938 rifle at. Nothing beats the feeling of fleeing from a Panzer that comes crashing into town just when you thought the coast was clear.

It was only the tedious and unfairly tricky tank sections that left us with a big red face of frustration. Otherwise, even if *Call of Duty 2: The Big Red One* has little new to offer, it's still gripping stuff from battle number one. So, there's just 100 other WW2 US army divisions for Activision to get through... GM

"CHECKPOINTS ARE SO FAR AWAY THEY'RE PRACTICALLY IN A DIFFERENT GAME"

Turret Torments

What's it like on your machine?

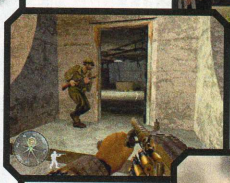
CUBE No multi-player? That's evil like Hitler.
PS2 Can't match the Xbox version's beauty.

The closest alternative on your console:

PC The Big Red One looks old-hat next to the blinding magnificence of Call of Duty 2.....92%

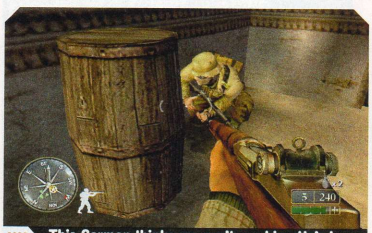
OFFICERS' MESS

We've been spoiled by *Call of Duty 2* on Xbox 360: your troops seem like simple fellows.



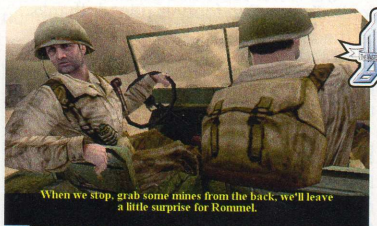
Their favourite trick is cowering behind a door, waiting for you to charge in and die.

We've also seen them killed by a tank. No problem there – but it wasn't even moving.



This German thinks we can't see him. He's in for a nasty surprise. IN THE HEAD.

There's some very picturesque scenery hidden behind the smoke, noise and death.



First rule of WW2 games: a ride in any kind of wheeled vehicle never ends happily.

JUDGEMENT

MARK

GM LOVES

+ War so real you can taste it
+ 1939's hottest guns
+ Gives you the sweats

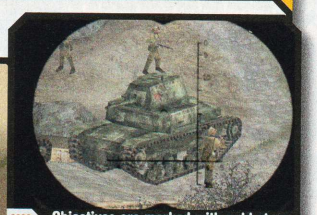
GM HATES

- So hard it hurts
- Tedious tankery
- Squad isn't too clever

THIS IS WAR

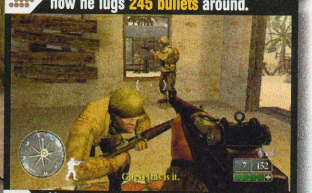
Answering the *Call of Duty* means sticking your gun in the face of German upon German, while your mates look a bit lost, fire half a bullet every five seconds, and kick the odd door down.

That was the thing about World War 2: it was incredibly brown.



Objectives are marked with gold stars. If in doubt, follow your friends.

So much ammo – we can only imagine how he lugs 245 bullets around.



Your team have the intelligence to yell the location of enemies.

GRAPHICS

Big eyeball treat. Sicily's rolling fields are so nice you'll want to stop for a picnic.

GAMEPLAY

Faster than ever before, aside from marathon troop-shooting moments.

LIFESPAN

Like all *CODs*, it's a one-trick pony – but just you try leaving Xbox Live alone.

OVERALL

84%

The tightest and toughest *COD* yet. No big surprises but what a lovely war.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN:..... COD: Finest Hour, 81%
WORSE THAN: Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood, 87%
ALSO OUT:. Call of Duty 2 (XB 360), 92%
BEST PRICE:..... £29.48, simplygames.com

REVIEW

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £19.99
• DEVELOPER: TEAM NINJA • PUBLISHER: TECMO • ONLINE: NO
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.TECMOINC.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

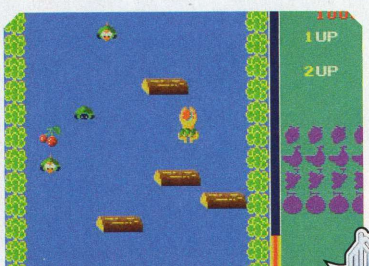
Solomon's Key – a tale of wizards, fairies, dragons and deadly green llamas. The only problem is, you have push up rather than press a button to jump. We thought that was outlawed in 1983.

TECMO CLASSIC ARCADE

Not all oldies are golden...

The box cover gives it away. Three games are given giant-sized top-billing 'Look! At! Me!' logos at the top of *Tecmo Classic Arcade's* packaging. *Eight* games are shyly tucked away at the bottom.

In other words, only 0.273 of this rummage through the *Ninja Gaiden* team's archives really guzzled the 10p's back in the day. And while loveable bomb-bagging platformer *Bomb Jack* and side-scrolling yoyo-'em-up *Rygar* will give UK oldsters a pleasant tingle in their memory areas, the other 'big three' title (American football game *Tecmo Bowl*) was only a hit in the US.



Challenging isn't the word – the average *Swimmer* game lasts 3.7 seconds.

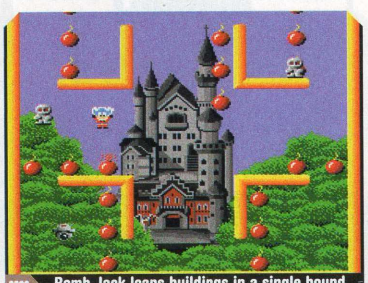
RETRO REVIVAL

The rest – including *Swimmer,* which really is just you swimming up a river – are new to us. The best of the bunch is probably *Solomon's Key* with its cute block-bashing elf, while the worst is definitely the dreadful four-table pinball sim *Pinball Action.* All the games are flawlessly dragged from their graves (only *Tecmo Cup* footy is ruined, thanks to the analogue stick making a poor substitute for the original cabinet's palm-blistering trackball), but it's a sparse line-up all the same.

DEAD AND BURIED

Extras? 45 bits of old Tecmo ads and merchandising bits and bobs, and that's your lot. Old, and weak. GM

Star Force doesn't perform badly for its age. Space was a bit empty then, though.



Bomb Jack leaps buildings in a single bound and stores live bombs in his pockets.

JUDGEMENT

MARK

GRAPHICS
Even for the time, Tecmo were hardly masters of the pixel paintbrush.

GAMEPLAY
Not much. Where's the vintage Tecmo: *Ninja Gaiden* or *Gemini Wing?*

LIFESPAN
Nothing to unlock, no online play, but at least it's not 10p a go anymore.

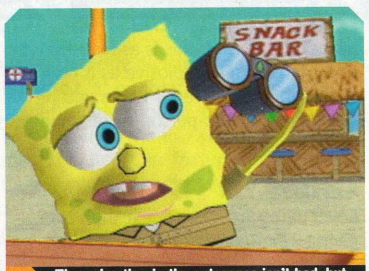
OVERALL
46%
Big pixels but tiny appeal: not enough games, and only a handful of them provoke nostalgia.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....Sonic Gems Collection, 57%
WORSE THAN:.....Capcom Classics, 78%
WAIT FOR:.....Taito Legends 2, TBC
BEST PRICE:.....£7.99, play.com

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £29.99
• DEVELOPER: THQ • PUBLISHER: THQ • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: DS, GBA, PC, GC, XB • WEB: WWW.THQ.CO.UK • PLAYERS: 1-4

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: LIGHTS, CAMERA, PANTS!

Are you ready, kids? (Loading...)



The animation in the cutscenes isn't bad, but SpongeBob CubePants is just wrong.

Got a watch? You can use it now to get an idea of how much fun this game is – by doing nothing for precisely one minute and 31 seconds. Give it a try now. We'll wait.

Not much fun, eh? Welcome to the world of *SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!'s* excruciatingly long loading and saving times. No surprise the mini-games in this sad *Mario Party* wannabe last so long – when you've got your chin in your hand for one and a half minutes while waiting to find out who won the last round, you need all the actual game time you can get.

BOREDOM SQUARED

Sadly, the mini-games are as much fun as cleaning the bath. Seeing as you've endured stuff like this – racing speedboats, bouncing boxes, bumping people off circular platforms – in every other party game, there's no excuse for *Pants!'s* iffy controls and half-hearted animation. Two-versus-two games like 180-Second Burger-Flipping ChoreTime (our name) are proper pants. Even with mates sitting next to you, you only feel like you're competing against the clock.

All that *Pants!* has to recommend it is the real voices from the TV show. Unless your friends are used to parties where fetching a bottle of pop from the fridge is accompanied by a two-minute pause, *Lights, Camera, Pants!* is the kind of shindig that no-one will be talking about the next morning. GM

GAME TIME

You can beat each round without winning all three mini-games: you're judged on points as much as placing.

Fishing for sea-junk is as easy as fish pie. Your rod practically controls itself.

Two-vs-two games are a lost cause solo, as your PS2-controlled ally has a SpongeBrain.

JUDGEMENT

MARK

GRAPHICS
Average. Why insist on 3D when flat TV-style looks would be better?

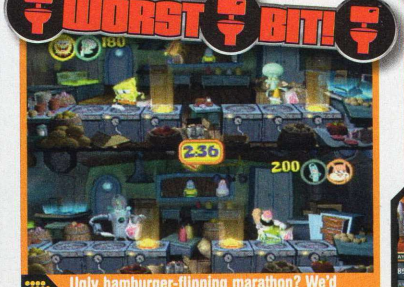
GAMEPLAY
Overlong mini-games that lack the competitive feel. Party's over, dudes.

LIFESPAN
Unlocking SpongeBob art is your only incentive to keep playing. So you won't.

OVERALL
54%
There are more mind-numbing moments in this game than there are holes in a sponge.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....Buzz!: The Music Quiz, 80%
WORSE THAN:.....Sega Superstars, N/A
WAIT FOR:.....New Year's Eve parties
BEST PRICE:.....£24.99, amazon.co.uk

WORST BIT!



Ugly hamburger-flipping marathon? We'd rather eat from a burger van.

PC

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £34.99
• DEVELOPER: WIZARDS OF THE COAST • PUBLISHER: ATARI
• ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: NO
• WEB: WWW.ATARI.COM/DRAGONSHARD/HOME • PLAYERS: 1-2

DRAGONSHARD

There's something special stirring in the dragon's brew

Take one large scoop of top hack 'n' slashing and add a generous sprinkling of classic city building, throw in a bunch of adventuring quests and you have the recipe for the joy that is *Dragonshard*.

In a typical RTS it would be a race to gather as many frontline troops as possible, but *Dragonshard* focuses on smaller squads and individual character skills. From health-restoring clerics to destructive Champions, your job is to select the squad, get the best from them and make them work for each other.

What makes *Dragonshard* really stand out is its variety and the mix of adventure, killing, building, team strategy and the fine balance between them all.

As the name suggests, *Dragonshard* takes place in a classic sword and sorcery world.

REVIEWER: CRAIG MCBETH

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 87%

A good debut effort from D&D that shakes up the tired RTS format.

PC

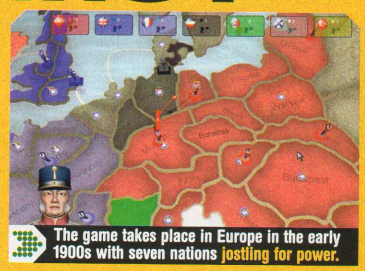
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £29.99
• DEV: PARADOX • PUBLISHER: DIGITAL JESTERS
• ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: NO
• WEB: WWW.DIPLOMACY-PCGAME.COM • PLAYERS: 1-7

DIPLOMACY

Once a board game, now just makes you bored...

What Paradox have tried to do here is turn the board game *Diplomacy* into PC game. To do this they'd have to come up with a decent multi-player interface or create devilishly clever AI, as the board game was partly about strategy but mainly about making smart coalitions with other players. It's as much about being smart with people as it is being smart with troops.

So the fact Paradox have failed with interface and the AI, meaning what we're left with is a tepid version of a now obscure board game. Fans of the real thing should steer clear while newcomers to the game will find it all a bit bewildering.



The game takes place in Europe in the early 1900s with seven nations jostling for power.

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 43%

Taking *Diplomacy* to the PC would require a lot of cunning. This game has none.

XBOX

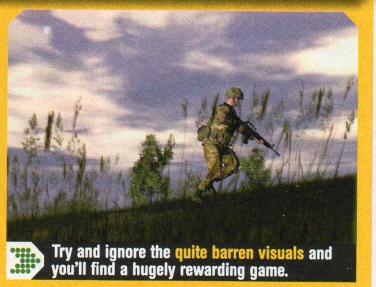
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £29.99
• DEVELOPER: BOHEMIA INTERACTIVE • PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS • ONLINE: YES • OTHER FORMATS: NO
• WEB: WWW.FLASHPOINTELITE.COM • PLAYERS: 1

OPERATION FLASHPOINT ELITE

The PC classic makes a console stand

Competing in an already over-crowded market with a game coming up to four years old, you'd expect *Flashpoint* to be staring down the barrel of a gun.

Scratch the surface, though, and you'll find a highly playable, highly immersive and remarkably realistic game. With a constant flow of team communication and bullets flying left, right and centre it's hard to know where to turn once in the thick of it. *Flashpoint Elite* serves up an in-depth and gritty look at war in the '80s that's not found elsewhere.



Try and ignore the quite barren visuals and you'll find a hugely rewarding game.

REVIEWER: CRAIG MCBETH

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 77%

The graphics have let it down, but the superb gameplay is still present.

PSP

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £19.99
• DEVELOPER: KILLERGAME • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
• ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: NO
• WEB: WWW.UBISOFT.COM • PLAYERS: 1

FRANTIX

Note the use of the X at the end to denote 'zaniness'.

This has some interesting ideas but it's a hard game to like. It's a puzzle game where in each level a certain amount of gems must be collected to unlock the exit. Within these levels are numerous traps, magical doors and water to avoid – and it's all against the clock.

But unlike *Super Monkey Ball* or even *Gripshift*, the puzzle solving is quite tedious and feels like 'busy work'. This, combined with the fact the graphics are dull and that there's a lot of quirky rules to grasp for some obstacles, means this isn't that fun or addictive.

Often the solution is found by bumping into everything and then seeing what happens.

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 55%

Not the best PSP puzzler – it's unattractive and all a bit tedious.

PS2 XBOX GAMECUBE GAME BOY ADVANCE PC PSP DS

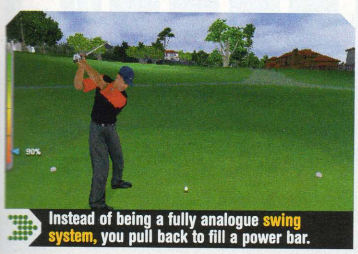
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £34.99
• DEVELOPER: EA • PUBLISHER: EA
• ONLINE: HEAD TO HEAD • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, XB, PC, GBA, DS, GC • WEB: WWW.EASPORTS.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006

Enabling you to swing all around town...

Golf games have always been perfect for handhelds, with their satisfyingly simple gameplay and neat portions of action so it's with some excitement we welcome *Tiger Woods* to the PSP.

It's basically a port of the full console game with a tweaked version of analogue swing control. It's been trimmed down in terms of courses and options to fit the PSP. This necessary sacrifice doesn't really damage the experience that much, and what also makes up for it is a multi-player WiFi option that lets you play against a mate. The only thing that could improve this is shorter loading times.



Instead of being a fully analogue swing system, you pull back to fill a power bar.

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 78%

Tiger makes the leap to the PSP without losing much of his lustre.

PS2 XBOX PC PSP

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £39.99
• DEVELOPER: VIVARIOUS VISIONS • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
• WIFI: CO-OP • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, XB, PC
• WEB: WWW.ACTIVISION.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

X-MEN LEGENDS 2: RISE OF APOCALYPSE

The 'Men and the 'Hood, working as one...

We've got a soft spot for the *X-Men Legends* games, as its team-based action RPG set up is a really great way of exploiting the talents of the mutant gang. And there's even more mutant to control this time, as the X-Men have formed a coalition with The Brotherhood to defeat Apocalypse. This means you can a team of four, including Magneto, Cyclops, Sabretooth and Wolverine.

Its episodic and simple gameplay sits comfortably on the PSP, so this is definitely worth a look if you haven't played the console version. If you have, move along, as it's just a direct port.

X-men Legend's top down view and the fairly basic graphics really suit the PSP.

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 76%

What looked a bit simple on the consoles, really suits the PSP.

REVIEW

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PSP • PRICE: £34.99
• DEVELOPER: NAMCO • PUBLISHER: SONY • ONLINE: NO • SPECIAL: LINK-UP
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: HTTP://WWW.NAMCO.COM • PLAYERS: 1-4

Pac Man Arrangement – based on a *Pac Man* update that lit up Japanese arcades in the mid-'90s – is classic *Pac* with bouncing power pills and giant ghost bosses. Makes us hungry just thinking about it.

NAMCO MUSEUM BATTLE COLLECTION

Namco's world in '80s days...

My, but Namco are greedy ones. They've opened more museums than Myleene Klass has supermarkets. Even your microwave will have a version of *Pac-Man* soon.

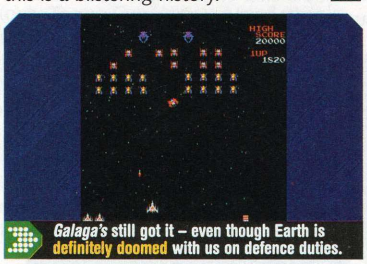
Still, *Battle Collection* is rammed with retro pleasure – 22 games is a pleasingly hefty total, even accounting for the *three* versions of racing maze classic *Rally-X*. Four games here are old rubbish (*King of Balloon* is *Galaxian* with the spaceships replaced – obvious in retrospect – with men holding balloons). But what's good is *very* good. *Pac-Man* never gets old, *Bosconian* is retro spaceshoot heaven, and *Mappy's* theme tune will infect your brain faster than the Crazy Frog.

LIVING HISTORY

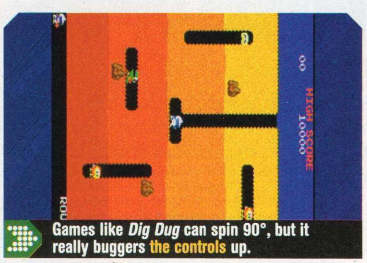
Everything's as crisp as a winter morning, too. In looks *and* play, these nuggets of digital history are the perfect fit for the PSP. There's a level select made just for weak-willed young 'uns.

The *Museum* isn't problem-free, though. We had massive trouble making out Galaga's teensy bullets on the PSP screen. And brilliant pistol-cracking platformer *Rolling Thunder* has ghostly black shadows stalking everything that moves. But we'll forgive that for the boss whose animated laugh makes it look like he's chewing on a sandwich.

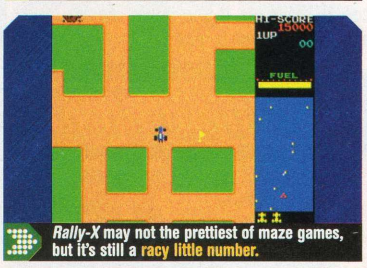
Beyond the games, there's no extra material and the multi-player's weak, too – only the four 'Arrangement' remixes have okayish co-op and versus modes, the best of which is a clone of Cube's brilliant *Pac-Man Vs.* But otherwise, this is a blistering history. GM



Galaga's still got it – even though Earth is definitely doomed with us on defence duties.



Games like *Dig Dug* can spin 90°, but it really buggers the controls up.



Rally-X may not the prettiest of maze games, but it's still a racy little number.

JUDGEMENT

MARK

GRAPHICS
Blazing bright on PSP, but that *Rolling Thunder* blur is inexcusable.

GAMEPLAY
Namco's classics really *are* classics. They're just made for the boring bus ride.

LIFESPAN
Start swapping high scores with your mates via WiFi and it'll never stop.

OVERALL
79%
The nostalgia crowd won't be disappointed, but there's better retro to come on PSP.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: Ape Escape Academy, 75%
WORSE THAN: ..... Lumines, 86%
WAIT FOR: ..... Taito Memories Pocket, TBC
BEST PRICE: ..... £29.99, amazon.co.uk

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: DS • PRICE: £29.99 • DEV: MAGIC POCKETS
• PUBLISHER: EA • ONLINE: NO • SPECIAL: LINK-UP • OTHER FORMATS: ALL OF THEM • WEB: HTTP://HARRYPOTTER.EA.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

That Potter boy must be stopped

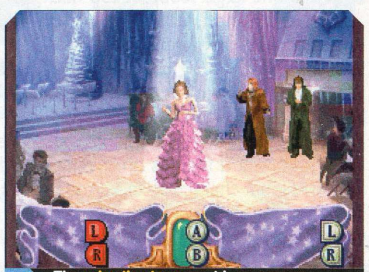
A big fat thriller of a book, a three-hour eye-smacker of a movie – creating a *Goblet of Fire* game that's anything less than spectacular takes real skill. EA has done it.

Goblet of Fire on DS is *Goblet of Fire* on GBA. Simple as that. And it *is* simple – a long, painful slog through soul-suckingly barren mazes. Our first *hour-and-a-half* of Forbidden Forest was a bush-igniting, pillar-levitating nightmare: no spells to collect, no moves to learn, samey enemies, and endless, endless forest. Basically, no game.

What *is* unique to DS is laughable. You may get what the game calls an "3D magical encounter" with a monster. Meaning, an ugly stylus-scribbling that drags the fight out five times longer than necessary. Otherwise, all you get for your second screen are the floating heads of Harry and co. pale and bobbing like they've been at the Butterbeer.

Goblet of Fire is one long sinking feeling: especially when you realise Harry's first Triwizard task really *is* just going to involve dodging rocks on a broomstick. It's so little to do with the actual point of the level (stealing the dragon egg), Harry might as well have just engaged in a teeth-clenchingly inappropriate *Dance Dance Revolution*-style mini-game.

Oh. That's right. *He does.* GM



The animation team must have gone on holiday for this bit, by the looks of things.

DON'T CARE

The Care Of Magical Creatures sub-game is a joke, really. You have to throw food and toys at Nibbler, and he'll either nod his head or shake his head. And *that's it.*

Bathtime for Nibbler involves throwing him a loafer and watching him have a bath. Thrilling.

Work out what the little runt wants and you get to tickle his nose. How pretty.

That's what friends are for: lifting heavy rocks for 90-odd minutes to help you out.

JUDGEMENT

MARK

GRAPHICS
Completely magic-free. Animation's more robotic than Radcliffe's acting.

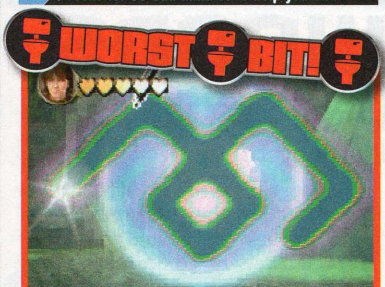
GAMEPLAY
Each level is one bad idea stretched out over at least an hour.

LIFESPAN
If you're as patient as us, the cart will be snapped in half after a day.

OVERALL
49%
Easily the worst *Harry Potter* game ever. It's not too late to cross it off your Christmas list.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..... A vomit-flavoured Every Flavour Bean
WORSE THAN: ..... Rayman DS, 58%
WAIT FOR: ..... Pirates of the Caribbean, June
BEST PRICE: ..... £24.99, amazon.co.uk

WORST BIT!



Look how 'exciting' this '3D magical encounter' is! Scribble over a spell shape...

...then watch agog at your incredible green spark of death. It's 3D all right.

KAIDO RACER

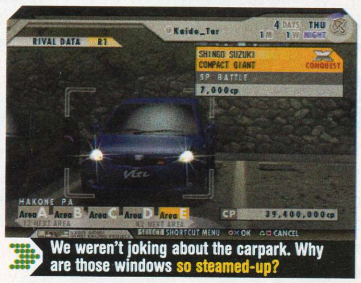
OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** PS2 • **PRICE:** £24.99 • **DEVELOPER:** GENKI • **PUBLISHER:** DEVELOPER • **ONLINE:** NO • **OTHER FORMATS:** NO • **WEB:** WWW.KONAMI.COM • **PLAYERS:** 1-2

This is one really weird racing game...

This Japanese street racer is one of the most curious games we've played. Taking a unique and somewhat avant-garde approach to the most straightforward of game types – the driving sim, developers Genki have created something distressingly complicated in *Kaido Racer.*

Using virtual email and forums, you have to contact racers called Slashers, Trickers and Lovers and arrange races. Or if you don't fancy racing, you have to lurk around parking lots at night and approach parked cars, which just gives the whole game a very seedy edge.

As for the actual racing, when *Kaido Racer* reaches its very peak, it still only skims the very edge of mediocrity. GM



We weren't joking about the carpark. Why are those windows so steamed-up?

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 52%

Bizarre racing game, that's only memorable for its strange Story mode.

SKI RACING 2006

OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** PS2 • **PRICE:** £29.99 • **DEV:** COLDWOOD INTERACTIVE AB • **PUBLISHER:** JOWOOD • **ONLINE:** NO • **OTHER FORMATS:** XB, PC • **WEB:** WWW.SKIRACING2006.COM • **PLAYERS:** 1

Finally – proof that gravity can be fun...

Ski Racing 2006 isn't a technically impressive game, it's not innovative and it's incredibly repetitive – but despite all that it's strangely addictive.

As the title suggests, it's a skiing game that allows you to compete in the various permutations of downhill and slalom that are part of the professional sport.

Of course, as all of these just involve sliding down a white slope there's only so much you can get excited about the game. But it makes such a pleasant change to weave down a hill majestically, rather than having to pull off *SSX*-style tricks incessantly. It helps that there's a real sensation of speed, making it a real alpine fresh experience. GM

Real skiing is hell on the knees, apparently, and you have to dress like a superhero.

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 61%

Always only going to offer limited value, but what it does, it does well.

LOST IN BLUE

OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** DS • **PRICE:** £29.99 • **DEVELOPER:** KONAMI • **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI • **ONLINE:** NO • **OTHER FORMATS:** NO • **WEB:** WWW.KONAMI.COM • **PLAYERS:** 1

Like an interactive ball and chain...

A real disappointment, as this had the potential to be brilliant. *Lost in Blue* is a RPG featuring a young couple fighting for survival on a deserted island. Initially, you play as the lad who has to make fires, fish and collect food to make sure his girlfriend lives. This should have been intriguing challenge, if it wasn't for that the game is so stat obsessed that your partner can starve to death in minutes. And she whinges all the bloody time about being cold or hungry. For Christ's sake! We're trying our best! GM

She even needs help over a tiny stream. Shape up woman!

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 63%

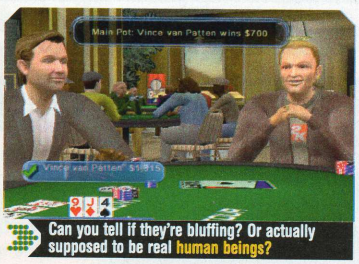
It's as joyless and as much hard work as being in a real relationship.

WORLD POKER TOUR

OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** PS2 • **PRICE:** £29.99 • **DEVELOPER:** VISUAL CONCEPTS • **PUBLISHER:** 2KSPORTS • **ONLINE:** TOURNAMENT • **OTHER FORMATS:** XB, PSP, DS, GBA • **WEB:** WWW.2KSPORTS.COM • **PLAYERS:** 1-4

Forget real gambling, this really is a mug's game...

Live the dream of wearing cheap nylon slacks and badly fitting sportswear, and become a Poker World Champion! Woo-hoo! Do you win any money? Of course not – this is only a game. That's right, here you are using up all the luck you have, for both cards and love, in a quest to beat AI opponents for nothing more than videogame prestige. How pointless. You play against 3D rendered opponents who have all the soul of a ragdoll and exude all the warmth of a Great White. Despite the World Poker Tour license, there's very little that thrills or entertains here. GM



Can you tell if they're bluffing? Or actually supposed to be real human beings?

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 45%

Futile. No money, no risk and no beers make this completely no fun.

GO! SUDOKU

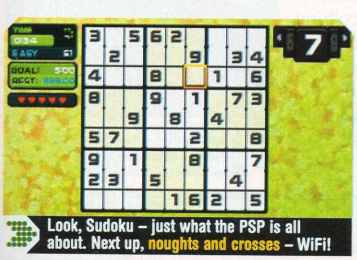
OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** PSP • **PRICE:** £19.99 • **DEVELOPER:** SUMO DIGITAL • **PUBLISHER:** SONY • **ONLINE:** WIFI GAME SHARING • **OTHER FORMATS:** NO • **WEB:** WWW.YOURPSP.COM • **PLAYERS:** 1-2

We've got this one's number, and it's not a one or a nine...

Aha! The grid-based number puzzle. We've met people who hate it and think it's the most hideous waste of time, but anyone who has whiled away a few pleasant hours with a Sudoku puzzle and a chewed Bic will know that it's just a mildly amusing brain tickler. And all you need is a book of them (now available extremely cheaply) and a little patience.

What you don't need is a twenty quid game and a PSP – which means *Go! Sudoku* is just a bit unnecessary.

The actual game is bit annoying, too, as every puzzle is timed (careful consideration is everything in proper Sudoku), so what should be a relaxing teaser ends up as a tense race against the clock. And as you can use trial and error with a few numbers this allows you to slip into some lazy Sudoku habits. GM



Look, Sudoku – just what the PSP is all about. Next up, noughts and crosses – WiFi!

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 48%

Not offensive but not really needed. Stick to doing them in the papers.

GRIPSHIFT

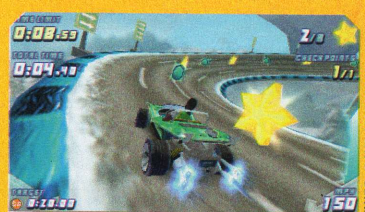
OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** PSP • **PRICE:** £19.99 • **DEVELOPER:** SIDHE INTERACTIVE • **PUBLISHER:** UBISOFT • **ONLINE:** VERSUS • **OTHER FORMATS:** NO • **WEB:** WWW.GRIPSHIFTGAME.COM • **PLAYERS:** 1-4

It's the antipathy of *Burnout*...

Ignore the slightly odd title, *Gripshift* is an entertaining puzzle game that's got a lot in common with *Super Monkey Ball.* But rather than rolling simian in a see-through ball by tilting the landscape, here you have to control a wacky haired man in a wacky buggy.

The rest should be familiar to *Monkey Ball* fans – the floating levels are riddled with obstacles and traps, a compromise has to be made between picking up bonuses and getting a quick level time, and lastly there are loads of mini-games to unlock. You can even play it as a straight circuit-racing game.

It's not mind-blowing entertainment, but its bite-sized challenges are perfectly suited to the PSP and is definitely one of the handheld's stronger original titles. GM



Do you make sure you collect every star or go for a quick level time? Oooh, decisions.

REVIEWER: DAVE HARRISON

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 71%

Pleasant car-based puzzler that sits snugly on the PSP.

MOBILE GAMES

Thieves and spiders. Unpopular in your flat, welcome on your mobile!

WIN WITH SPIDEY

BLOCK ROCKIN'

Mogame has offered to kit out five lucky readers with an *Ultimate Spider-Man* goodie bag. Each sack contains a copy of the game on the console of your choice, an *Ultimate Spidey* comic, T-shirt and heat reactive mug. Just answer this question:

Spidey's real name is Peter...
a) Pan
b) Mandelson
c) Parker

Order or chaos? It's your call in *Ultimate Spider-Man*.

Then text GM SPIDER then a space followed by your answer A, B or C to 87103 by 12th Jan. Text cost is 25p. See page 113 for full terms and conditions.

PHONE NEWS

BLOCK ROCKIN'

Recent hits *Meteos*, *Lumines* have proved that *Tetris*-style block puzzlers are still great. And with Gameloft bagging the rights to both titles *and* their sequels, the craze is set to continue. Expect to see mobile *Lumines* and *Meteos* in early 2006.

Lumines – it's fiendish, frenetic and still the numero uno puzzler on PSP...

MOBILE TOP 5

HOW DO TEAM GM WHILE AWAY THEIR JOURNEY TO WORK?

1. THE X-FILES: THE DESERTER
Mulder and Scully on mobile!
2. MEDIEVAL COMBAT: AGE OF GLORY
Kind of like *Soul Calibur in 2D*. Nice.
3. CIVILISATION
Brought back so many memories. *Sigh.*
4. SUPER REAL TENNIS
Even better than the lovely Maria Sharapova.
5. 3D MAJOR CARNAGE
This Buzz Lightyear rip-off sure is pretty.

BEGINNERS

Mobile games may be simple, but installing them can be a nightmare. We show you how...
1. Either surf to the website of your fave mobile game provider (e.g. Gameloft, I-Play, THQ Wireless) or keep an eye out for bargain game deals on your own network.
2. Simply follow the onscreen instructions. Ordering and receiving via SMS is usually the best way to go, but remember to check whether the game is compatible with your mobile model.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

WEBSITE:...WWW.MFORMA.COM

Mess with Spidey and you're likely to meet a sticky end.

Feeling heroic? Save the city with Spidey. Having a bad day? Mash NY to itty bitty pieces with the evil Venom. *Ultimate Spider-Man* panders to both your good *and* evil sides, since Spidey's missions revolve around protecting the innocent (which is ever so slightly dull), while Venom is more concerned with murder and complete destruction (infinitely more fun).

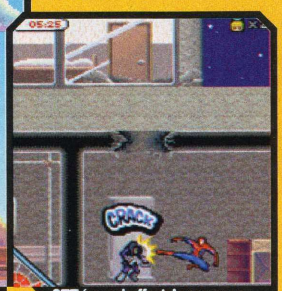
Both characters can hang from ledges, scale sheer walls and zip from platform to platform in typical arachnid fashion. Venom favours super jumps and dangly tentacles, while Spidey's more natural prowess with the sticky white stuff means he handles like a trapeze artist's dream.

During this classy side-scrolling beat/swing/save-'em-up you'll encounter thugs, cops, attractive blonde females and even super villains like the Green Goblin. Missions descend into tense games of cat and mouse as you pursue Spidey or the villains across cityscapes duffing up grunts and (in Venom's case) feeding off the innocent civilians.

The simple fact that you're able to choose between two top characters adds lashings of replay value, as well as being pretty darn commendable for a mobile title. The vast environments are impressive, it looks even sexier than Mary Jane and packs in a Big Apple-full of missions to beat.

Though *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within* remains the premier mobile actioner, this friendly neighbourhood *Spider-Man* is well worth tracking down. GM

Medieval carts, skyscrapers and men who think they're spiders – the bizarre world of Spider-Man.

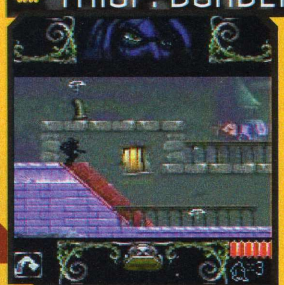


OTT 'sound effects' accompany the chop-socky action.

OVERALL While not quite the ultimate mobile platformer, Spidey is a blast for comic book fans. **84%**

THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS

WEBSITE:...WWW.INFOSPACEGAMES.COM


Garret's success depends on sticking to the shadows.

Kicking off with one of bandit Garret's famous monologues, *Thief: Deadly Shadows* drips with atmosphere. From the moment you tiptoe up to your first guard before delivering a knockout blackjack blow, you know *Deadly Shadows* is going to rock.

The screen illuminates if you step out of the darkness, you pick locks using a combination of keypad presses, distract enemies with whistles – *Deadly Shadows* is simply packed with features. Okay, so some moves can be fiddly to pull off and combat is fiddly, but we've got to doff our caps to sheer design ingenuity. *Thief* is second only to the mighty *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow* as the prince of taught, stealthy mobile action. GM

Deadly Shadows' lockpicking mini-game is fiddly but rewarding.

OVERALL Snore-inducing loading times apart, this is genius – plus there are *two* episodes to enjoy! **88%**

CIVILISATION 3

WEBSITE:...WWW.COM2US.COM

Slap down cities in areas where resources are plentiful.

Mobile Master's retro love-in continues with this mobile reimagining of a Sid Meier classic. For those young 'uns among you, *Civilisation* was an epic turn-based strategy in which you nurtured a tribe from backwater savages into refined toffs. Along the way you'll raise armies, manage budgets, build roads and enjoy 'Eureka!' moments through scientific and cultural discoveries. Keep your subjects happy and they'll pledge undying loyalty, manage your treasury like Gordon Brown and bloody revolt is a certainty. It may sounds a touch complicated, but *Civilisation 3* is a real slow burner. Its epic scale has been wound in a bit for mobile, but the languid pace and refined controls mean this is a top choice for the thinking mobile gamer. GM

Construct Wonders of the World like Michelangelo's Chapel...

OVERALL Proof that mobiles can do 'intelligent' just as well as 'zany', this is a true classic. **85%**

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Tip of the Month

The Sims 2 PS2

Cheat Gnome
PS2 While playing a game, press L1, R1, ↑, ⊗, R2. The Cheat Gnome (Plumb Bob Trophy) will appear on the lots and the following codes can be enabled:
XBOX As above but press L, R, ↑, A, ●
CUBE As above but press L, R, ↑, A, Z

9,999 Simoleons
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press R1, L1, R2, →, ← while playing a game. Select the Cheat Gnome, then Interaction/Location: Give Simoleons.
XBOX As above but press R, L, ●, →, ←
CUBE As above but press R, L, Z, →, ←

All Locations
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press ◎, L2, ←, ◎, ↑, ◎ while playing a game. Select the Cheat Gnome, then Interaction/Location: Unlock/Unlock All Locations.
XBOX As above but press B, ○, ←, B, ↑, B
CUBE As above but press X, B, ←, X, ↑, X

All Objects
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press L2, ◎, ↓, ←, ↑ while playing a game.
XBOX As above but press ○, B, ↓, ←, ↑
CUBE As above but press B, X, ↓, ←, ↑

All Recipes
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press R2, □, ↑, ↓, →, ⊗ while playing a game.
XBOX As above but press ●, X, ↑, ↓, →, A
CUBE As above but press Z, B, ↑, ↓, →, A
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press □, R2, ↓, →, □ while playing a game.
XBOX As above but press X, ●, ↓, →, X
CUBE As above but press B, Z, ↓, →, B

Full Motives
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press ↑, ◎, ↑, →, L2 while playing a game. Select the Cheat Gnome to access the option to fill all motives.
XBOX As above but press ↑, B, ↑, →, ○
CUBE As above but press ↑, X, ↑, →, B

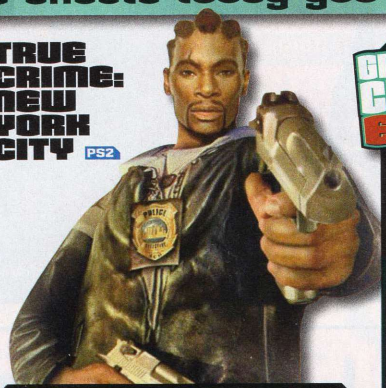
Set Skill Level
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press △, ◎, □, R2, ← while playing a game. Select the Cheat Gnome, then Interaction/Location: Change Skill – [name]/Change to [number].
XBOX As above but press Y, B, X, ●, ←
CUBE As above but press Y, X, B, Z, ←

Advance Time by 6 Hours
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press ◎, □, L1, ↑, ↓ while playing a game. Select the Cheat Gnome, then Interaction/Location: Advance 6 Hours. Note: Using this code when someone is at work or away may cause problems with them coming back.
XBOX As above but press B, X, L, ↑, ↓
CUBE As above but press X, B, L, ↑, ↓

Horn Audio
PS2 After enabling the Cheat Gnome (see above) press R1, L1, R1, L1, △ while playing a game.
XBOX As above but press R, L, R, L, Y
CUBE As above but press R, L, R, L, Y

Development Team Picture
PS2 XBOX CUBE At the title screen, press →, ↓, →, ↓, →. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a Sim voice.

True Crime: New York City PS2



Having infinite ammo isn't quite as handy on the streets of Norwich New York.

Infinite Ammunition
PS2 At the CompStat/Map screen, hold L1 + R1 and press ◎, □, ⊗, □, □, △
XBOX As above but hold L + R and press B, X, A, X, X, Y

Infinite Endurance
PS2 At the CompStat/Map screen, hold L1 + R1 and press ◎, □, ⊗, □, ⊗, ◎
XBOX As above but hold L + R and press B, X, A, X, A, B

$1 Million
PS2 At the CompStat/Map screen, hold L1 + R1 and press □, □, △, □, △, □
XBOX As above but hold L + R and press X, X, Y, X, Y, X

Double Damage
PS2 At the CompStat/Map screen, hold L1 + R1 and press ⊗, ⊗, □, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗
XBOX As above but hold L + R and press A, A, X, A, A, A

Easy Mode
PS2 At the CompStat/Map screen, hold L1 + R1 and press ◎, □, ⊗, ⊗, △, ◎
XBOX As above but hold L + R and press B, X, A, A, Y, B

Greatest Cheats Ever!

Babies on trikes attacking medieval spearmen

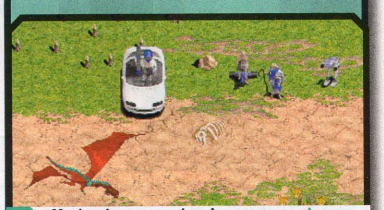
Age of Empires PC

PUBLISHER: Microsoft
YEAR OF RELEASE: 1997

Classic RTS *Age of Empires* is still going strong thanks to its comedy cheats.

Press enter during gameplay, type the following codes in the chat box and tap enter again. Here are some of the memorable selections on offer...
Photon Man: Summons a bloke with a laser gun.
Bigdaddy: Summons a sports car.

In the *Rise of Rome* expansion pack, things get even more hilarious...
King Arthur: Changes birds into dragons.
Pow: Summons baby on trike.
Stormbilly: Summons mech unit.
Who says Microsoft doesn't have a sense of humour?



Mechs, dragons, and racing cars – much more fun than cavemen, triremes and catapults, no?

Super Cop Mode
PS2 At the CompStat/Map screen, hold L1 + R1 and press △, ⊗, △, ⊗, △, △
XBOX As above but hold L + R and press Y, A, Y, A, Y, Y

Redman Gone Wild Mini-Game
PS2 At the CompStat/Map screen, hold L1 + R1 and press △, ⊗, ⊗, ◎, △, □. Alternatively, get a 100% game completion then go to the location given by Redman when he calls
XBOX As above but hold L + R and press Y, A, A, B, Y, X

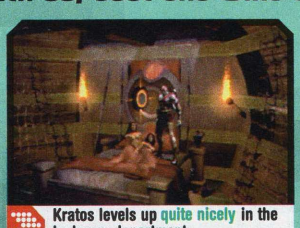
Puma Shoes Costume
Collect all ten pairs of Puma shoes hidden in the city, then go to the Puma Shoe store to get the Puma Shoes costume.

Your Top 10 Tips

Share your top tips with us, best one wins a game!

1. God of War PS2

Free Experience Orbs
After defeating the Hydra, you'll appear inside a ship's cabin surrounded by two topless girls. Jump onto the bed and press ◎ to start a kinky mini-game. Complete it and you'll be rewarded with red orbs. Repeat until exhausted!
Peter White, Milton Keynes



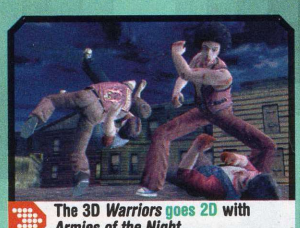
Kratos levels up quite nicely in the bedroom department...

2. Black & White 2 PC

Set the date to 1st April in Windows before playing the game. You'll discover your character's footprints have all been replaced by smiley faces!
Jake Owen, Huddersfield

3. The Warriors PS2 XBOX

Unlock Armies of the Night arcade.
Beat the game completing the main and all flashback missions. When you return to your hangout you'll find a coin-op called The Armies of the Night. It's a cool tribute to old school 2D beat 'em ups like *Double Dragon*.
Gary Hoffman, email



The 3D *Warriors* goes 2D with *Armies of the Night*...

SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG PS2 XBOX CUBE

UNLOCK EXPERT MODE
Get an "A" rank in all stages
UNLOCK LAST STORY
Complete every sixth stage in Story mode, then get all ten Hero and Dark story line endings
UNLOCK SHADOW RIFLE
Complete the Last Story
UNLOCK EGG VACUUM
Complete the Neutral story line with the Hero ending to unlock the Egg Vacuum. Use the Egg Vacuum to suck up 20 objects (enemies, etc.) to gain an extra life.

Give Shadow the latest in erinaceidae (posh word for hedgehog) weaponry with these tips.

UNLOCK HEAL CANNON
Complete the Hero story line
UNLOCK OMOCHAO GUN
Complete the Semi Hero story line
UNLOCK SAMURAI BLADE
Complete the Dark story line
UNLOCK SATELLITE LASER
Complete the Semi Dark story line
UNLOCK TWO PLAYER MODE
Use controller two to play as the Hero characters, such as Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, etc. This also works with Maria, but does not work with Doom's Eye.

SOUL CALIBUR 3 PS2

PLAY AS ABELIA
Clear Chronicle 18 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 1,050 battles
PLAY AS ABYSS
Unlock Cervantes, Lizardman, Olcadan, Rock, Sophitia, and Yoshimitsu, then successfully complete Tales Of Souls mode. Alternatively, play 725 battles.
PLAY AS AMY
Get an evaluation of "Clear" or higher in Beloved on the Easy difficulty setting in Soul Arena mode, or play 1,250 battles.
PLAY AS ARTHUR
Defeat Arthur in Tales Of Souls mode or play 550 battles.
PLAY AS AURELIA
Clear Chronicle 12 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 900 battles.
PLAY AS CERVANTES
Defeat Cervantes in Tales Of Souls mode or play 625 battles.
PLAY AS CHESTER
Clear Chronicle 19 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 950 battles.
PLAY AS DEMUTH
Clear Chronicle 10 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 850 battles.
PLAY AS GIRADOT
Clear Chronicle 15 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 800 battles.
PLAY AS GREED
Defeat Greed in Tales Of Souls mode or play 500 battles.
PLAY AS HUALIN
Defeat Hualin in Tales Of Souls mode or play 750 battles.
PLAY AS HWANG
Defeat Hwang in Tales Of Souls mode or play 600 battles.
PLAY AS LI LONG
Defeat Li Long in Tales Of Souls mode or play 1,150 battles.
PLAY AS LUNA
Clear Chronicle 11 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 650 battles.
PLAY AS LYNETTE
Defeat Lynette in Tales Of Souls mode or play 1,100 battles.

Complete the *Soul Calibur 3* roster by battling through the Tales of Soul mode.

TOP 20 CHEATS

Oh cheaty cheats how we adore thee! Check out our updated UK Top 20...

01 WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW 2006 PS2

DO IT: Successfully complete a season in SmackDown! and RAW WHAT IT DOES: Receive unlimited created wrestler points.
DO IT: Complete the Superstar challenges. WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks the Legend Steel Cage matches.

02 STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT 2 XBOX

DO IT: Pause the game in Story, Instant Action or Galactic Conquest mode and press ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ←, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ←, ←, ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, →. WHAT IT DOES: Invincibility.

03 FIFA 06 PS2 XBOX PC PSP

DO IT Edit player stats so they all read 99 (in Manager mode, remember to cut contracts down because otherwise their salaries will be massive).
WHAT IT DOES: Makes your boys virtually unbeatable.

04 GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES PSP

DO IT: At the controller setup screen, press →, ↓, →, ↓, ←, ↑, ←, →. While playing a game, press ↑, ↑, ↑, △, △, ○, L, R.
WHAT IT DOES: All multi-player pedestrians, cars, Portland and Shoreside Vale locales unlocked.

05 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5 PS2 XBOX PC

ENTER IT: Start an international league and select only two teams to enter the league. You will only have to play two games to earn match winning points and 1,500 *PES* points each time you win the league.
WHAT IT DOES: Easy peasy *PES* points.

06 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE PS2 XBOX PC DS

DO IT: Use the Wingardium Leviosa spell to transport the block you find on the 2nd level of the Forbidden Forest everywhere with you on the stage.
WHAT IT DOES: Levels Wingardium Leviosa spell to maximum strength quickly.

07 THE SIMS 2 PS2

ENTER IT: While playing, press L1, R1, ↑, ⊗, R2. The Cheat Gnome will now appear. Now enter: ○, L2, ←, ○, ↑, ○ while playing.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks All Locations.

08 RESIDENT EVIL 4 PS2

ENTER IT: Wait until you are low on ammunition before upgrading a gun.
WHAT IT DOES: The replacement gun will always have a full clip, giving you extra bullets that otherwise may be difficult to find.

09 THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO PS2 XBOX PC

DO IT: Successfully complete the first level.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks the super-tough 'The One' difficulty setting.

10 THE WARRIORS PS2 XBOX

DO IT: Complete the Armies Of The Night mini-game.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlock Ghost Swan, Ghost Ajax, Ghost Cyrus, Ghost Fox, and Ghost Cleon for play.

11 TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND PS2 XBOX CUBE

DO IT: Enter "the_condor" as a code or complete Classic mode on the Hard or Sick difficulty setting.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks BMX legend Mat Hoffman.

12 ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN PS2 XBOX CUBE

ENTER IT: When low on health, choose the 'Unlockables' selection. Select a different costume.
WHAT IT DOES: You'll now have full health.

13 AGE OF EMPIRES 3 PC

DO IT: : Type the following into the chat window:
WHAT IT DOES: Give me liberty or give me coin – 10,000 coin. Medium Rare Please – 10,000 food.

14 GUN PS2 XBOX PC

ENTER IT: When playing Texas Hold 'Em raise your bid to max. Keep checking your hands until one of you wins.
WHAT IT DOES: Loads of easy money.

15 FOOTBALL MANAGER 06 PC

DO IT: Try to sign the following young players... Anthony Vanden Borre, Anderlecht, D RC, £1 million. Vincent Kompany, Anderlecht, DC, £5 million. Giuseppe Rossi, Manchester United, AM/FC, £3million. WHAT IT DOES: This top young talent will help bolster your team.

16 BUZZ! THE MUSIC QUIZ PS2

No cheats for *Buzz* at the mo, so get your ancient *Now That's What I Call Music!* Collection down from the attic and get up to speed on all those 'classic' tracks!

17 POKÉMON EMERALD GBA

DO IT: Put the *Pokémon* you want to gain experience in front of party, then fight someone. When the battle starts, switch it out for a better Pokémon.
WHAT IT DOES: Easy experience.

18 CALL OF DUTY 2 PC

DO IT: Press ~ to display the console window, then enter 'developer 1' as a command to enable cheat mode. The 'Load' button will now appear.
WHAT IT DOES: Mission Select.

19 CRASH TAG TEAM RACING PS2 XBOX CUBE

DO IT: At the main menu, press R1, ○, R1, ○.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks Japanese Crash.

20 CIVILISATION 4 PC

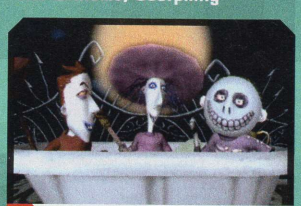
DO IT: Build resource-specific improvements on specific resources only.
- Build mines on hills.
- Build watermills near rivers.
- Build cottages on all other spots.
- Clear jungles ASAP.

WHAT IT DOES: Your civilisation develops quickly.

4. THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS: OOGIE'S REVENGE PS2

Continue screen bonuses
After Jack dies and the continue screen appears, try to stop the timer at the following times...

7.77: 500 souls
Single blinking pumpkin, no souls lost.
0.01: 500 souls
Crystal Bottles, Blue Souls, and Red Souls refilled (if you have a Gold Pumpkin).
Tim Williams, Caerphilly



Two's company, while three in a bath is just getting plain weird.

5. FIFA 06 PS2 XBOX CUBE

To score from penalties nearly every time, simply tap ○ with no direction pressed. One-Nil!
Rob Jameson, Newport

6. DOOM 3 PC

Press Ctrl+Alt+~(Tilde) to bring up the command console. Then type the following commands...
pm_thirdperson 1
3rd Person View
give berserk
Berserk mode
clearlights

Alone. In the Dark. Again. Bugger. A cheat you may live to regret...

All lights off. Only light is your torch... scary!
Chris Pound, email

Use the third-person if you want to see more of your terrified marine.

Cheat Master

PLAY AS LIZARDMAN
Defeat Lizardman in Tales Of Souls mode or play 675 battles.
PLAY AS MISER
Defeat Miser in Tales Of Souls mode or play 750 battles.
PLAY AS OLCADAN
Defeat Olcadan in Tales Of Souls mode or play 575 battles.
PLAY AS REVENANT
Defeat Revenant in Tales Of Souls mode or play 1,200 battles.
PLAY AS ROCK
Defeat Rock in Tales Of Souls mode or play 475 battles.
PLAY AS SOPHITIA
Defeat Sophitia in Tales Of Souls mode or play 525 battles.
PLAY AS STRIFE
Clear Chronicle 20 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 1,000 battles.
PLAY AS VALERIA
Defeat Valeria in Tales Of Souls mode or play 700 battles.
PLAY AS YOSHIMITSU
Defeat Yoshimitsu in Tales Of Souls mode or play 425 battles.

MARIO KART DS DS

UNLOCK LEAF CUP
Win a Gold trophy in the Shell Cup and Banana Cup.
UNLOCK LIGHTNING CUP
Win a Gold trophy in the Leaf Cup.
UNLOCK STAR CUP
Win a Gold trophy in the Mushroom Cup and Flower Cup.
UNLOCK SPECIAL CUP
Win a Gold trophy in the Star Cup.
UNLOCK 150CC MIRROR MODE
Win all Gold trophies in all cups in the Retro Grand Prix 150cc class.
UNLOCK MISSION MODE MISSION 7
Get a 1 Star or greater rank on each level of missions 1 to 6.
UNLOCK BONUS KARTS
Win a Gold trophy in all cups in the Nitro Grand Prix in the 100cc class to unlock a third kart for all characters. Win a Gold trophy in all cups in the Nitro Grand Prix in the 150cc class to unlock a total of seven karts for all characters. Win a Gold trophy in all cups in the Retro Grand Prix in the 150cc Mirror Class to unlock all karts for all characters.

Shell out as much as you can to guarantee Gold Trophy glory and unlock every mode.

PLAY AS DAISY
Win a Gold trophy in all cups in the Nitro Grand Prix in the 50cc class.
PLAY AS DRY BONES
Win a Gold trophy in all cups in the Retro Grand Prix in the 50cc class.
PLAY AS R.O.B.
Win a Gold trophy in all cups in the Mirror Mode Nitro in the 150cc class.
PLAY AS SHY GUY
Play a Download Play game against another player to have the option to play as Shy Guy. Shy Guy can only be used in Download Play mode.
PLAY AS WALUIGI
Win a Gold trophy in all cups in the Retro Grand Prix in the 100cc class.
ALTERNATIVE TITLE SCREEN
Win all Gold trophies in all cups and classes to change the title screen.
DEVELOPMENT TEAM GHOST TIMES
Successfully complete the indicated circuit with a time less than the target to unlock its development team ghost racer, with the corresponding best time:
Baby Park: 0:55:000 (0:50:920 best time)
Figure-8: 1:38:000 (1:36:481 best time)
Luigi: 1:37:000 (1:29:759 best time)

MARIO PARTY 7

UNLOCK BOWSER'S ENCHANTED INFERNO BOARD
Complete all boards in Solo mode and defeat Bowser to unlock Bowser's Enchanted Inferno board in Deluxe and Party modes.
EXTRA CREDITS
Unlock the Power Star Statue. Enter the shop, select it from the souvenir stand, then say "Surprise" into the microphone.
BONUSES
The following bonuses can be bought in the shop for the shown number of mileage points:

Ancient Jar:	500 points
Annoy Mode:	500 points
Aquarium Secret:	500 points
Birdo character:	1,000 points
Blooper Fortune-Teller:	500 points
Bowser's Boiled Eggs:	500 points
Bowser's Crazy Torch:	500 points
Bowser's Killer Cannon:	500 points
Brutal difficulty:	1,000 points
Character Voices:	1,000 points
Cheep Cheep Fountain:	500 points
Cruise Secret	1: 500 points
Cruise Secret	2: 500 points
Desert Chocolate:	500 points
Desert Goomba:	500 points
Dry Bones character:	1,000 points
Fuzzy Sheep:	500 points
Gong Clock:	500 points
Grand Canal Cookies:	500 points
Hop Hat Shy Guy:	500 points
Ice Moves mini-game:	3,000 points
King of the River mini-game:	2,000 points
Koopa Shepherdess:	500 points
Kung Fu Kooopa:	500 points
Kung Fu Koopa T-Shirt:	500 points
Map Sounds in Solo Cruise:	1,000 points
Model Rocket:	500 points
Model Windmill:	500 points
Mysterious Flying Disc:	500 points
Orb Shop Secret:	500 points
Pyramid Piggy Bank:	500 points
Singing Shy Guy:	500 points
Souvenir Secret:	500 points
Staff Records:	3,000 points
Steel Goomba:	500 points
Stick and Spin mini-game:	3,000 points
Sticky Buns:	500 points
Stunning Background:	2,000 points
Team Secret:	500 points
Top Hat Chocolate:	500 points
Tour Sounds:	1,000 points
Windy Cheese:	500 points

It's the party where everyone picks on Bowzer. How unfair is that?!

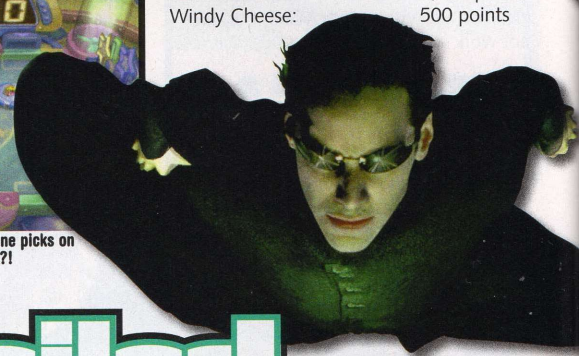
THE HARDEST GAMES IN THE WORLD

Reach Insane Speeds

F-ZERO GX CUBE

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2003

F words abound whenever we play Nintendo's brilliant racer *F-Zero*. It's futuristic, funky, flashy, but it's also fricking frustrating. But don't despair! Here's the secret snake technique that'll help kick the likes of Captain Falcon and Samurai Goroh into touch...
Firstly, pick a heavy vehicle like the Black Bull. Then, at the start of the race, hold either L + ⬅ or R + ➡. When you're about to hit the wall, switch to the other direction. You'll soon reach insane speeds that not even non-stop boosting can keep up with.

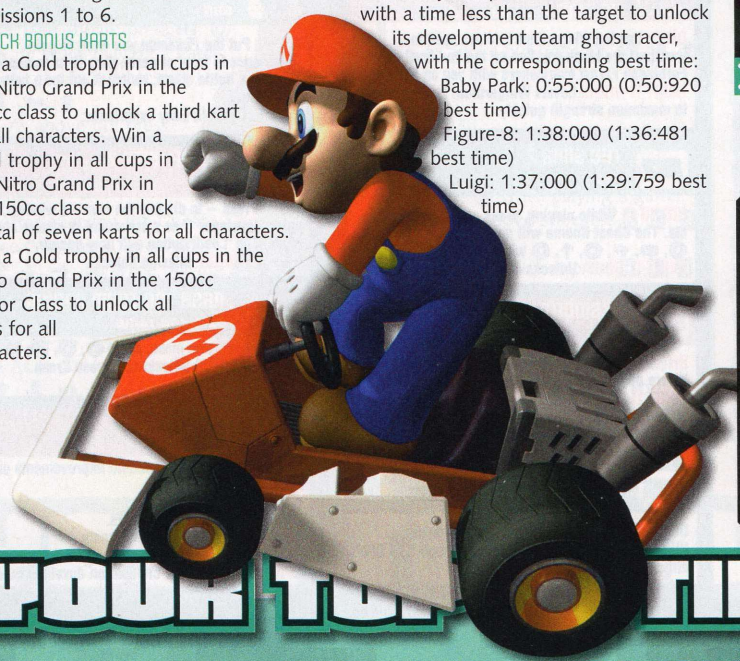


Spoiler!

Baffled by the end of the *Matrix*? Hey, weren't we all, so here's our explanation in mirror writing...

THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO PS2 XBOX PC

Want to know what happens in that cool new ending the Wachowski Brothers promised us for Path of Neo? Then read on dudes...
The Wachowskis appear, and reckon that Neo simply martyring himself like he does at the end of Matrix: Revolutions would be boring. So instead, the all those Smiths you've just despatched form one giant Agent Smith (complete with giant sunglasses) which Neo is forced to fight.
After you've kicked his ass once and for all, everybody celebrates humankind's victory over the machines to the strains of "We are the Champions" by Queen. Surreal is not the word, folks.



YOUR TOP TIPS

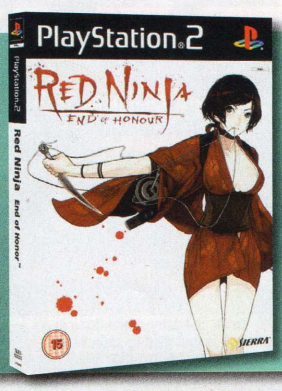
7. NARC XBOX

All Drugs and $10,000:
Repeatedly press L + R + ⬅ thumbstick button.
Mission Skip:
Repeatedly press L1 + R1 + ⊗
Unlock Original 1988 Arcade NARC:
Collect all 25 secret stashes in USA.
Michaela Sharland, Devon

Try and unlock the original NARC arcade, it's better than this version.

8. RED NINJA: END OF HONOR PS2 XBOX

Defeat the first boss double-quick
Wait until he jumps to attack (he's off guard then) and smack him with your wire. When the clones arrive focus on killing just one of them, then re-target the original and wait until he jumps again before smacking him. Repeat until he's history.
Nathan Conrad, email



9. HAUNTING GROUND PS2

Finish the game to unlock the hard difficulty setting, the 'Secret Room' option, and the alternate dog, cowgirl, and illegal in some states costumes. The 'Secret Room' is where you can view movies, change costumes, and play the mini-game.
Finish the game under the hard difficulty setting to unlock the frog and stuffed dog costume.
Roxy Taylor, email

VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

CUBE

PLAY AS CHARLES THE THIRD
Complete any Story mode chapter with any two characters.

PLAY AS DARK HERO JET BLACK
Complete the Boss*Boss*Bang*Bang chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS DIRECTOR BLUE
Complete the Gulliver's Battles Special Edition chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS FIGHTER BIANKY AND FRIENDS
Complete the Red Hot Rumble chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS GRAN BRUCE
Complete any chapter in Story mode with any four characters.

PLAY AS HEROINE SILVIA
Complete the Viewtiful Cartoon World Special Edition chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS HULK DAVIDSON
Complete any chapter in Story mode with any three characters.

PLAY AS MANAGER JET
Complete the Atlantis: Four Adventures Of The Sea Special Edition chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS MOVIE FAN JOE
Complete the Captain Blue Begins Special Edition chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS RACHEL
Complete the Les Acteurs Incroyable chapter in Story mode.

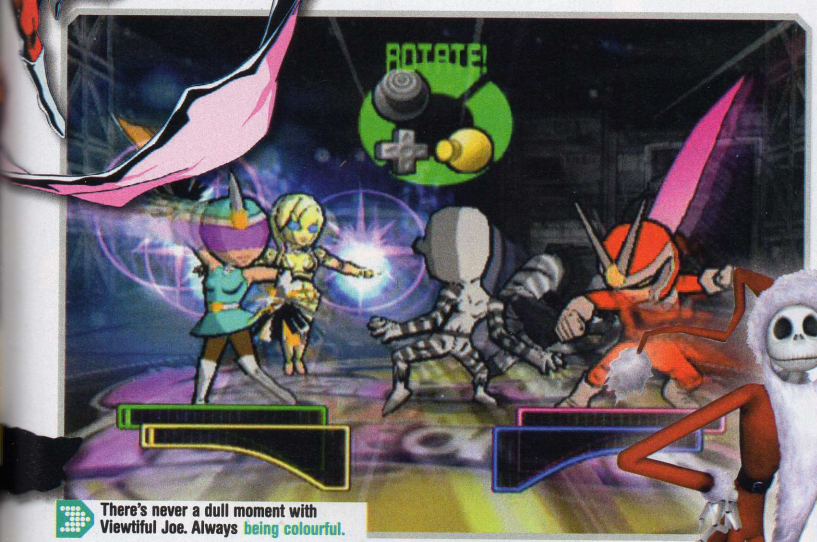
PLAY AS SPROCKET
Complete any chapter in Story mode with any character.

PLAY AS STYLISH ALASTOR
Complete the Riddle Of The Incan Empire! Special Edition chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS YOUNG BLUE JR.
Complete the Truth Of The Black Film Special Edition chapter in Story mode.

PLAY AS YOUNG CAPTAIN BLUE
Complete The Hidden Hideout chapter in Story mode.

ALTERNATIVE COSTUMES
Complete all V-Puzzles to unlock the "EX Color" option at the character selection screen. Highlight a character and press X to choose the EX version of their costume.



There's never a dull moment with Viewtiful Joe. Always being colourful.

WE WANT YOUR TIPS

We want your best tips and secrets for any game. Make sure they're cool things you've discovered and email them to gamesmastertips@futurenet.co.uk or by post to My Top Ten Tips, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. The best tip every month gets a free game.

Fiona's 'illegal in some states' outfit. Nice necklace there.

10. RIDGE RACERS PSP

Track mirror mode
Hold Select when choosing a course in single race or Time Attack mode.

Unlimited nitro
Hold Select when choosing "OK" at the car and track confirmation screen (final screen before the race begins) in single race or time attack mode.

Michael Green, Brighton

Dominate any race with the Unlimited Nitro trick.

CONSOLETATION ZONE

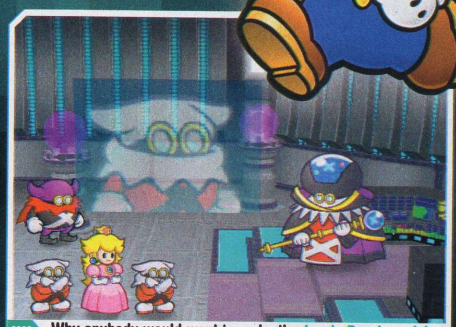
GM – coming to the aid of stuck gamers since 1993!

PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND YEAR DOOR PS2

Dear *GamesMaster*,
Please can you help me! I'm stuck on *Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door* on GameCube. There's a room where Princess Peach has to concoct an invisible potion. Unfortunately, whenever I try to brew the correct ingredients I either shrink or grow to giant size! What's going on?

Anthony Spenceley, London

This puzzle is a bit of a toughie Anthony, but we're here to make all your worries disappear. Ready? Here goes... From left to right, put the potions in the machine in this order: red, blue, orange and green. Next, press the button on the far-left to turn the machine on. Whenever the beaker randomly stops at a potion, press the corresponding button. Finally, wait for *exactly* 30 seconds (it helps to have a stopwatch) and press the red button below the beaker. If you do this correctly, it will make Peach invisible. Phew!



Why anybody would want to make the lovely Peach vanish is beyond us, but Anthony Spenceley asked and he got!

NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS PS2

Dear *GamesMaster*,
I need help with Nightmare before Christmas, level 13. You have to find the four vampire bats and return them to their coffins but I can't find the fourth bat. Number one was outside the house, the second was by the large fish bone device and the third was in a secret area in the ghetto section. But where's the last one? I think the game is great but this is doing my nut in. Cheers.

Paul Simpson, Stoke-on-Trent.

Here are the four locations Paul...

Bat 1: Towers of Torment – Use the Soul Robber to get above the area with that green acid-like liquid.
Bat 2: Towers of Torment – Across the roofs, near the loudspeaker.
Bat 3: Hemlock Homestead – flying around the houses.
Bat 4: Serpent Hideout secret area – easy to spot.

Now all that remains is for Jack to return the Vampire Brothers to their coffins and collect the keys to the Mayor's house as his reward...

Helping out those Vampire Bros. was driving Paul Simpson batty. He'll no doubt be extremely fangful for our advice...

GOT A PROBLEM? STUCK IN A GAME?
WE CAN HELP! EMAIL IT TO US AT GAMESMASTERTIPS@FUTURENET.CO.UK, SUBJECT CONSOLETATION OR WRITE TO CONSOLETATION ZONE, GAMESMASTER, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH. BA1 2BW. IF WE CAN'T HELP - YOU'VE HAD IT!

GM'S TOP 5 MOST WANTED TIPS

01: CALL OF DUTY: BIG RED ONE
War: bad to be involved in, great for tipping! Mark found this blast through WW2 a gruelling challenge – can you help him out?

02: 50 CENT
The prince of hip-hop's game is harder than Fiddy himself. Have you got any cheats for us to ease the pain?

03: POKÉMON XD
Where are the locations of the battle CDs? We can hardly find any!

04: NFS: MOST WANTED
We're after the sexiest mods, fastest rides and coolest short cuts you've uncovered...

05: THE WARRIORS
Any tips for getting Sawn and his boppers back to Coney in one piece?

KNOW HOW TO...

Complete *Liberty City Stories* like a *GTA* pro...

TIPSTER
Dave Harrison

TIME TO COMPLETE
Oooh, 30 hours or so.

BEST BIT
The *Smash TV* style mission is fun where you have to fend off a load of guys with chainsaws. Or any of the on-rail shooting missions, it's always fun to just let rip.

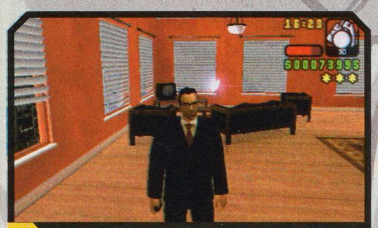
HARDEST BIT
The Search and Rescue mission. You have to find Salvatore, rescue him from his kidnappers by blasting your way through a troop of gangsters. Then get Sal out, alive, even though there's more thugs and cops are lining up to take a crack at you both.

grand theft auto
Liberty City Stories

Forget about step-by-step mission guides – all they do is spoil the plot, and spoil the thrill of the *Grand Theft Auto* experience. You want what's around every corner to be a surprise, enabling you to savour every twist and fall for every deception.

With this in mind, we've created a guide that will give you just enough help to get by. We'll provide you with the locations of the Secrets Packages, places where you can pick up free weapons and body armour and lastly where to find the Other Pastimes (side missions to take add some variety). But first we're going to outline some strategies that can be employ for general play and specific missions.

HOW TO SURVIVE



SAVE AFTER MISSIONS

It can be a bind, and it's tempted to crack on with the missions when you're right outside the mission start point, but stay disciplined and get back to your safe house. Stock up on health, body armour and ammo along the way so that every time you restart the game from a save you'll be prepared for anything. Putting a decent car in your garage also helps as it will save you time running round the streets trying to find some wheels.

If you don't save, you run the risk of losing all your weapons and money spent getting out of jail and restocking on weapons. Death and arrest is around every corner in *GTA* so don't run the risk.

LEARN TO USE

The Pay'n'Spray is your best friend as it makes seemingly impossible escapes possible. So learn where it is, which way the entrance is pointing and the quickest way to get there.

Whenever you use a Pay'n'Spray your Wanted Level doesn't go down immediately; it flashes, which means if you commit a felony the Wanted Level returns to its previous state. Because of this be very, very careful when reversing out as there's usually a police car right outside that will be pursuing you. Be patient, wait in the Pay'n'Spray until the flashing has stopped, then leave – carefully.

Useful for missions: Smash and Grab, Don in 60 Seconds, Dead Meat, The Morgue Party Candidate

USE THE BIG MAP

Don't just rely on the tiny map in the bottom left of the screen, take time to pause and use the big map. This is vital for two reasons:

1. It allows you to plan your journeys when you're being pursued. Look to use the straightest roads to give you time to build up speed, while avoiding tricky short cuts that might cause you to roll your ride.
2. You can locate targets. Often you're required to take out multiple targets. Checking on the big map gives you to time how to work out how to intercept them as quickly as possible and which order to tackle them. Also, it just gives you time to think.

Useful for missions: A Volatile Situation, Overdose of Trouble, Steering the Vote

THE SNIPER-RIFLE

Some of the toughest missions involve storming a very well guarded dock/base/alleyway. If you go in head first you will almost certainly be out-gunned. What we suggest is keeping your distance and using the sniper rifle. It's definitely best to approach from an angle that gives you clearest view of the base/alley, then pick off the targets.

What this does is keep you out of the range of the enemies machine guns and even if they do start charging it gives you time to pick them off as they approach.

Useful for missions:
Search and Rescue, The Passion of the Heist, Love on the Rocks

SPEND ON WEAPONS

Don't be tight with your money. Spending money on the right weapons will really help you in the long run. Always have an SMG for drive-bys, an assault rifle for nearly all shoot outs, a sniper-rifle and when you can a rocket launcher. The launcher is pricey but it's amazingly handy whenever you have to take out a target that's in a boat/helicopter/armoured truck. Or just use the maps to find some free stuff.

Useful for missions:
Munitions Dump, Dead Reckoning, Cash Clash

AUTO-AIM IS YOUR FRIEND

In many missions you'll be approaching a well armed based where the immediate threat is well hidden – so use the auto-aim. Approach whatever situation you're unsure of and keep on hitting the R1 button to locate the next threat. Even if you still can't get a clear shot, once you've got a location you can deal with the guard/hood/gangster.

Useful for missions:
Search and Rescue, anything that you need a gun for

USE BIKES

We found getting around far easier on bikes partly because the vehicle takes up much less of the PSP screen, which is small enough as it is. But it's also great for chasing down targets as you can shoot forward from the saddle and it's easier to get on and off if you have to use a larger weapon than an SMG. But on missions where you have to take passengers or have to escape from the police, it's best to choose four wheels for the extra protection.

Useful for missions: Counterfeit Count

ON-RAIL SHOOTING

These are either from the back of cars or boats. What people tend to do here is constantly target the vehicles rather than the main threat – the gunmen. While taking out the cars and boats is great fun, if you can quickly target the gunmen on-board the boats and cars then you can limit the amount of damage you'll take.

Useful for missions:
Caught in the Act, Sayonara Sindaccos

WEAPONS

1. Shotgun near the ferry point on the end of the pier.
2. Ingram – past the car crusher in between a hut and a red shipping container.
3. Axe – behind the fire station.
4. Hockey stick – outside the apartments in Hepburn Heights.
5. Sniper Rifle on the roof of the building under construction, only accessible via a leap off the ramp by the Doll's House (the Sindacoo building you blow up with the car bomb).
6. Molotov Cocktails – in the rubble of the destroyed Doll's House
7. Tec-9 – up a steep alleyway in an apartment yard.
8. AK-47 – Underneath a water tower on the roof top that you can reach using the stairs down the alleyway near JD O'Toole's place.
9. Knife – on the patio of Marco's Bistro.
10. Shotgun – on the roof of the supermarket. You can reach by dropping from the train track.
11. Cleaver – by market stall in the pedestrian bit of China Town.
12. Knuckle dusters – in alleyway by taxi company.
13. Uzi – by cabin on the pavement by the bridge.
14. Flamethrower – on roof of the AM Petroleum building. Use the ramp in the yard next door to access it.
15. Grenades – at the back of the tanker.
16. Chainsaw – behind the saw mill.
17. Sawn-off shotgun – in the rubble of the blown-up warehouse.
18. Laser sighted sniper rifle – On the balcony of the Ecoli restaurant only accessible after completing the Bringing Down the House mission.
19. MP5K – at the end of a jetty.
20. Knuckle duster – in small alley.
21. Hockey Stick – Under tree by stadium
22. Bat – inside the bike shop. Break the window to get to it.
23. Molotov cocktails – by steps outside toilets.
24. Grenades – behind Ammu-nation.
25. Sawn-off shotgun – in the doorway of huge skyscraper.
26. Chisel – on a covered walkway.
27. M4 – between two containers near the pier.
28. Samurai sword – in alley by dojo
29. Shotgun – in the alley where Toni gets 'made'.
30. Uzi – in an alley behind Liberty Tree.
31. Sniper Rifle – on top of the star statue.
32. Sniper Rifle – on top of the tunnel entrance.
33. Remote grenades – on top of the roof control building.
34. Remote grenades – in the pool behind house.
35. Molotov cocktails – in the picnic area.
36. Uzi – under the bridge on by the column.
37. MP5K – in the courtyard of Boners Pet Food Company.
38. Shotgun – behind the Ammu-Nation billboard.
39. Chainsaw – in garage behind police station.
40. Sawn-off shotgun – behind Liberty King billboard.
41. MP5K – under the low overpass.
42. Sniper rifle – under collapsed bridge
43. Samurai sword – on the roof of the Turtle Head warehouse
44. Magnum – on the overhang on the front of the airport. Access the roof by using the ramp by the fire station.
45. Rocket launcher – by the water under the elevator bridge.
46. M60 – on a hangar roof-top.
47. Knife – on steps outside subway.

ARMOUR

1. In the fenced-off area under the ferry area.
2. On the train track, just above the dirt bike track.
3. On top of radio station roof, jump from train track to reach it.
4. On garage rooftop and the end of the grassy slope that leads to sloped roof.
5. On top of warehouse near Liberty Pharmaceuticals.
6. Near the large white containers.
7. On the lowest section of the pier.
8. At the back of the hospital in between wall and cabin.
9. On roof top that can be accessed by jumping from curved road.
10. By the pool by apartment.
11. In an alleyway behind Ammu-Nation.
12. On top of building which can be accessed by climbing several flights of stairs.
13. In the corner of underground carpark.
14. By the hedge in the house next to the Shoreside safe house.
15. In the warehouse by the dam.
16. In the yard of Liberty Pharmaceuticals.
17. Behind Kronos billboard near the water.
18. Inside hanger.

HEALTH

1. In a small gap in a row of garages.
2. Inside your safe house.
3. Under blue walkway by the Pay'n'Spray.
4. In alleyway behind Ammu-Nation.
5. In the long alleyway in St. Mark's.
6. On the patio of St. Mark's Bistro.
7. On the shoreside path that runs parallel to the train track.
8. By hospital entrance.
9. Near the entrance to the super-market.
10. On the pavement near small alley.
11. In alley near a pile of cardboard boxes.
12. On basketball court.
13. In front of donut store.
14. In between lock-ups.
15. On leafy pathway by water.
16. By the main entrance to the hospital.
17. By the small entrance to hospital.
18. On the grass in the corner of carpark.
19. On the grass near Café Staunton.
20. Inside safe house.
21. On the doorstep of road side shops.
22. On a grassy hill near wall.
23. On the steps at the entrance of a tall white building.
24. Inside the glass building with the wooden ramps.
25. In a corner of the shoreside under pass.
26. On the grass outside casino.
27. In small alcove of a black and white building.
28. Underneath eaterie billboard.
29. On the path to the dam observatory.
30. Inside safe house.
31. In the picnic area.
32. On the grassy bit of lower dam.
33. In the door of the apartments at Wichita Gardens.
34. Outside the hospital.
35. Between truck trailer and billboard in warehouse yard.
36. In the fountain by statue near subway entrance.

PAST TIMES

Portland
1. Bump & Grinds – Sanchez bike
2. Trash Dash – Trashmaster
3. Scrapyard Challenge – Sanchez bike
4. Firefighter – Firetruck
5. Thrashin' RC – Toyz Van
6. Car Salesman
7. 9mm Mayhem – Freeway
8. Paramedic – Ambulance
9. Wong Side Of The Tracks – Sanchez Bike
10. Red Light Racing – payphone
11. Noodle Punk – Noodleboy
12. Vigilante – Police Car
13. Scooter Shooter – Faggio
14. RC Triad Take-Down – Toyz Van
15. Taxi Driver – Taxi
16. Low Rider Rumble – payphone
17. Slash TV

Staunton Island
18. Paramedic – Ambulance
19. Trash Dash – Trashmaster
20. Deimos Dash – payphone
21. Firefigher – Firetruck
22. Bike Salesman – Hogs & Clogs
23. Ragin' RC – Toyz Van
24. Go Go Faggio – Faggio
25. Vigilante – Police Car
26. Well Snacked Pizza – Pizzaboy
27. Love Media's "Car-azy Car Giveaway"
28 Torrington TT – payphone

Shoreside Vale
29. AWOL Angel – Angel
30. Wi-Cheetah Run – payphone
31. Vigilante – Police Car
32. Gangsta CP – payphone
33. Paramedic – Ambulance
34. Trash Dash – Trashmaster
35. Firefighter – Firetruck
36. Chasin' RC – Toyz Van
37 See the Sight Before Your Flight

BRIBES

Portland
1. Floating above the overpass. Use nearby wooden ramp to reach it.
2. In wide but not very long alley.
3. Opposite St. Mark's Bistro.
4. In a small slope alleyway.
5. Positioned by a stunt jump between the police station and hospital.
6. By the pillars next to the warehouse doors.
7. On the grass by some trees.
8. On a grass verge near a dirt track.

Staunton Island
9. On the grass by a shore side pathway.
10. In courtyard.
11. In short alley opposite where you park for the Search and Rescue mission.
12. On a path underneath the elevator bridge.
13. On foot bridge in the centre of the park.
14. On grass slope down the side of the police station.
15. On grass section of the road by some trees.
16. In carpark near the casino.
17. Near the star statue.

Shoreside Vale
18. Grass section opposite the entrance to the dam.
19. On driveway leading to the Pay'n'Spray.
20. On steep grass bank near tower blocks.
21. In warehouse yard near stairs to roof.
22. On grass section near just of the road near the hospital.
23. By the barricade the on road leading to hangars.

EVERY HIDDEN PACKAGE

PORTLAND

1. On a large rock of the northern coast of the island.
2. Inside guard booth by the ferry port.
3. Pebbled area between two metal barriers. Access by boat.
4. Next to car crusher.
5. Under the train track on the grass bit of the dirt track.
6. Just where the concrete railway ends.
7. On the roof of the petrol station. Use a bike to leap onto it from the 8-Ball side of the complex.
8. Inside car wrecks next to 8-Ball's
9. In construction site near cabins.
10. On the top of the small building in the alley next to your safe house. Clamber up a truck/ambulance to reach it.
11. Can only be accessed after you've blown up the Doll's House. Do the Stunt Jump through the rubble and look for it on an overhang.
12. On the far end of rock arch behind Salvatore's.
13. By the rubbish bins in the alleyway.
14. Inside the rubble of the Doll's House.
15. In alleyway behind Toni's mum's house. Use carpark stairs and ledges.
16. On the cliff overlooking the beach.
17. On the stairs leading up to the lighthouse.
18. In the yard behind Ammu-Nation.
19. Near the rubbish bins in the wide alley.
20. In the central reservation under the rail track.
21. On the patio of St. Mark's Bistro.
22. Under the train platform on grassy slope.
23. On the roof of the station. Get a bike and use the steps as a ramp.
24. In alley opposite the hospital.
25. On the ledge at the back of the hospital.
26. On the roof of the most easterly warehouse. Get a bike, use the ramps by red girders to get to roof, then leap the gaps on foot.
27. In the central part of a long alleyway.
28. On pile of shipping containers. Use a truck to clamber on top of it.
29. In woodland area just south of the police station.
30. On top of the Don Kiddick's Sausage Factory. Drop onto it from the train track.
31. In carpark.
32. Behind vent on the roof of large warehouse which can accessed by stairs.
33. On warehouse roof next to AM Petroleum building.
34. On the supporting structure underneath the bridge. Use concrete ramp to get to them, then walk to the package.
35. On white beam in between the two lanes on the bridge.
36. On the upper deck of the tanker. You'll need a bike to get onto the tanker.
37. Behind building in the bus station yard.
38. In between the last two truck trailers.
39. By rubbish bins at the end of the warehouses.
40. At the end of the wooden pier.

SHORESIDE VALE

1. In carpark by cabin and truck stand.
2. On the grass by ramp near a costal path.
3. In the rubble of tunnel construction sight.
4. Right by the water on the pebbled area.
5. In the plants east of the hospital carpark.
6. Behind a gray brick wall by the road side.
7. Behind the Bottiglia sign above the building door. You have to leap up to the ledge then walk round to collect it.
8. In the subway station by the toilets.
9. Behind a dumpster in alley.
10. On a structural bridge column, underneath the road.
11. On a small gray rock in the water.
12. By a concrete pipe outlet and ramp along a coastal path.
13. In a carpark south of the stadium.
14. In first floor window in a house destroyed in the Bringing Down the House mission.
15. On the roof of the Staunton Café.
16. In between two green dumpsters by 8 Ball's garage.
17. On the shoreside right by a freeway supporting column.
18. At the end of the bridge catwalk.
19. At the base of the park statue.
20. Rooftop above a doorway of a building. Clamber up on top of a car.
21. On top of a concrete structure by four lane freeway. You can get to it by clambering on to the grass sidings.
22. By large red shipping container.
23. In the plants right by the start of the Callahan Bridge.
24. On the bridge right by one of the ramps.
25. In the grounds of the cathedral.
26. On first floor of Phil Cassidy's gun shop.
27. By a tree in the central reservation.
28. At the top of the stairs of Capital Building.
29. At the back of the Big Shot Casino.
30. Just by side entrance of large building.

STAUNTON ISLAND

1. In the tunnel next to warning barriers.
2. By the water on the grass.
3. By the shipping containers near the dam.
4. Right by the water by the dam's pier.
5. In the garden of third house from mansion.
6. Just by turning to the dam, behind some bushes.
7. By the water near the picnic area.
8. At the base of some white tanks.
9. Behind the Third Leg billboards.
10. On mountains overlooking the apartments.
11. By the piles of wood in yard.
12. In garage by Pay'n'Spray.
13. By tree next to steps.
14. Western side of the river bank.
15. In the doorway of a Wichita Garden apartment block.
16. By the water on some rocks.
17. By a dumpster near Donald Love's place.
18. On the Kluntwarehouse. You'll need a stunt jump to reach it.
19. On warehouse roof. Use ambulance to climb up the wall then hop onto the roof.
20. Behind the Kronos billboard.
21. In grassy area south of Pike Creek.
22. On airport entrance overhang access it with ramp in yard next to fire station.
23. Behind hangar.
24. On the wing of a plane. Use a bike up the stairs.
25. On entrance overhang. Use a bike up the stairs.
26. Under the elevator bridge.
27. Another overhang. Use a bike up the stairs.
28. In the middle of some containers. Bike jump into the centre.
29. In between yellow striped ramps.
30. Near the water by the southern-most runway.
30. Down a ramp right by the water.

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WIN! PRINCE OF PERSIA

In what year was the original *Prince of Persia* game released on the Apple II?

A) 1980
B) 1989
C) 1999

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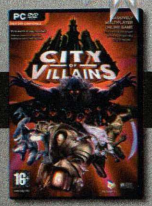
TEXT QUIZ2 (SPACE) A,B,OR C TO 87103

WIN! CITY OF VILLAINS



Which of these is a famous villain in the *Spider-Man* universe?

A) LEX LUTHOR
B) THE JOKER
C) THE GREEN GOBLIN

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TEXT QUIZ3 (SPACE) A,B,OR C TO 87103

FREE-ORDER YOUR XBOX 360!...

Win the ultimate next-gen set-up, including a Xbox 360 console, 32" HD TV and the long awaited Perfect Dark Zero to play on it!

The Xbox 360 launch is here, but if you've pre-ordered too late or just don't have a spare £270 to get yourself a 360 now, don't despair. Thanks to Microsoft, here's your chance to win one of the best gaming set-ups money can buy.

Microsoft are giving away a whole host of prizes. First up, our winner will get themselves the super-powerful Xbox 360 console, complete with hard-drive and wireless pads, which is ready to connect online straight away. Then, to play all the games as they should be played – in high definition – our winner will also receive a massive 32" Samsung HD TV plus a limited edition copy of *Perfect Dark Zero*.

We also have a further 10 prizes for 10 lucky runners up – each will receive a limited edition copy of *Perfect Dark Zero* and an Xbox 360 goodie bag containing a t-shirt, hat, pen, badge and more.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning one of these incredible prizes, is answer the question below:

What date did the Xbox 360 launch in the US?

a) 22nd November
b) 25th November
c) 1st December

Closing date: 13th January 2006.

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2. EMAIL US

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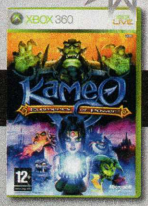
WIN! KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER



Which of these characters doesn't appear in *Kameo: Elements of Power*?

A) JOANNA DARK
B) MAJOR RUIN
C) RUBBLE

5 COPIES TO BE WON

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Which of these is *not* a city featured in *Project Gotham 3*?

A) LAS VEGAS
B) LONDON
C) HULL

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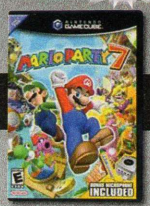

Which of these is not a character in the *Mario* universe?

A) PEACH
B) LEMON
C) LUIGI

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What date did the Xbox 360 launch in the US?

☐ a) 22nd Nov ☐ b) 25th Nov ☐ c) 1st Dec

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

In what year was the original *Prince of Persia* game released on the Apple II?

☐ a) 1980 ☐ b) 1989 ☐ c) 1999

CITY OF VILLAINS

Which of these is a famous villain in the *Spider-Man* universe?

☐ a) Lex Luthor
☐ b) The Joker
☐ c) The Green Goblin

KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

Which of these characters doesn't appear in *Kameo: Elements of Power*?

☐ a) Joanna Dark ☐ b) Major Ruin ☐ c) Rubble

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

Which of these is *not* a city featured in *Project Gotham 3*?

☐ a) Las Vegas
☐ b) London
☐ c) Hull

MARIO PARTY 7

Which of these is not a character in the *Mario* universe?

☐ a) Peach
☐ b) Lemon
☐ c) Luigi

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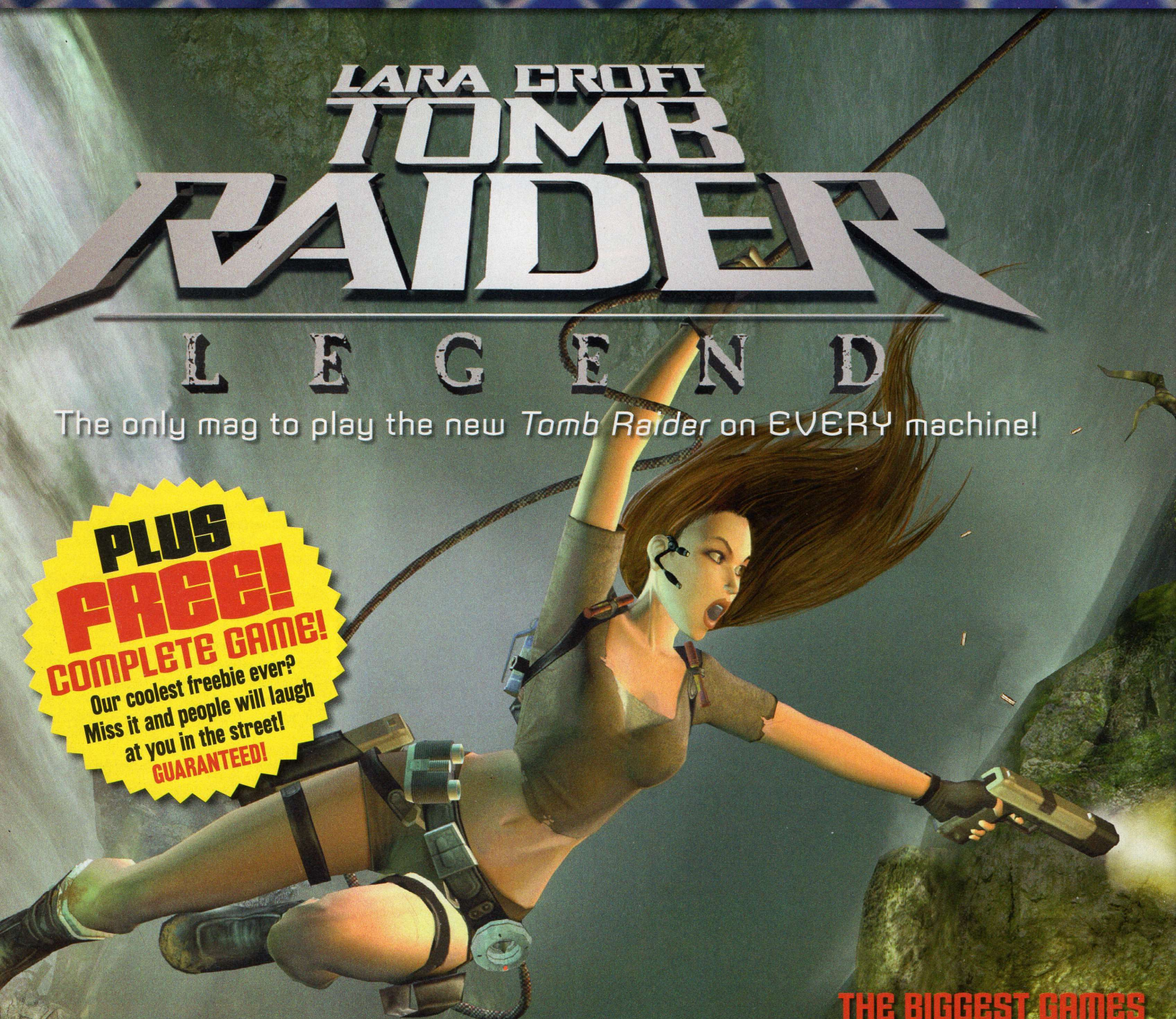

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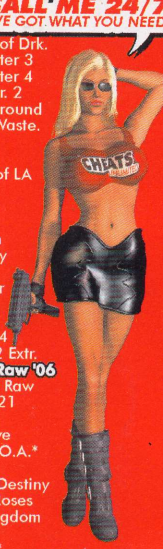

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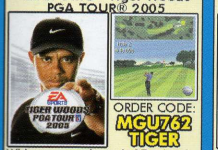
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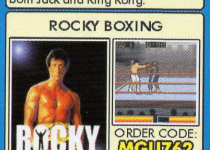
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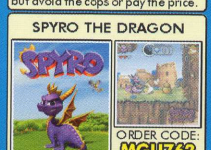
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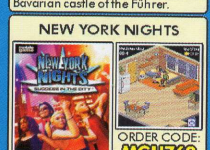
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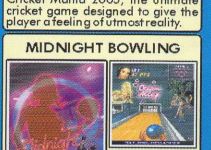
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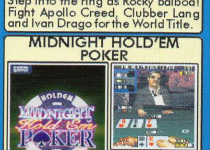
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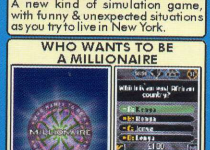
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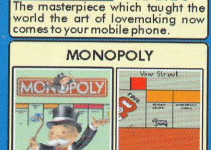
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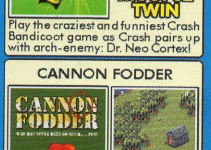
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